TEMPER,

OR

DOMESTIC SCENES:

A TALE.

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A TALE,

IN THREE VOLUMES,

BY MRS. OPIE.

"A horse not broken becometh headstrong, and a child left to himself will be wilful."

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TEMPER,

OR

DOMESTIC SCENES.

A TALE.

"THIS is mere gossip, I am sure," said Mr. Egerton when the report of St. Aubyn's marriage reached him; "for I am certain Henry would have done me the honour to inform me of his marriage prospects, had any such existed."

And while Mr. Egerton said this, dear as he had always been to his affectionate pupil, she felt him at that moment dearer to her than ever:—but, as yet unacquainted with the nature of her own feelings towards St. Aubyn, she attributed her emotions to the indignation of injured

friendship, which resented not being in the confidence of its object.

"No, no," continued he, "I can never believe that he would take a fancy to this fashionable belle and blue stocking."

"Pray, sir, what is a blue stocking?" said Emma.

"That is a question which I am not able to answer with perfect accuracy; especially as the term 'blue stocking' is one that has, like many others, varied from its original signification."

"I believe, I am *sure*," replied Emma, "that I am most interested in knowing what is its present meaning: still, I should like to hear all you can tell me on the subject."

"I have heard that it had its origin in the mistake of a foreigner, who, on being invited to a party of ladies and gentlemen that were in the habit of meeting for the purpose of conversation, asked whether he must come in full dress? and

was told in answer, By no means; you may come in blue stockings:—meaning by that, that any undress was admissible."

"But what could be meant by blue stockings?"

"I conclude worsted or thread stockings of that colour, occasionally worn even by gentlemen in a morning. The foreigner, however, conceived that *bas bleus* were the livery of the party to which he was invited; and he went about describing them as wearing *bas bleus* at their meeting, and requiring their visitors to do the same. Hence arose the title of 'the blue stocking society,' given to the ladies and gentlemen in question; amongst whom were some of the first wits, scholars, moralists, poets, and painters, of the day."

"I thought," said Emma, "that 'blue stocking' was a term applied to ladies only?"

"So it is now; but originally it must,

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from its origin, have been common to both sexes."

"Now, however, it is used to women only, is it not, sir? and is it not used as a term of reproach rather than of commendation?"

"I fear it is," replied Mr. Egerton, smiling at the eagerness with which Emma asked the latter part of the question, and which he accounted for by his having denominated Mrs. Felton a 'blue stocking:' "but whether justly or not, you shall judge for yourself. A 'blue stocking' is now, I believe, strictly speaking, nothing more than a woman who loves reading and literature, and who courts the society of literary men and women. Sometimes, perhaps, she is herself a writer, but not a professed one; and she occasionally makes her friends happy and flattered by the sight of manuscript verses and translations."

"Oh! then surely, sir," interrupted Emma smiling, "there are strong symptoms of blue stockingism about me!"

"Wait till I have finished, Emma. The 'blue stocking' however, after all, only dips her foot in the waters of Helicon, without daring, like the bolder published authoress, to plunge in altogether. But giving the name of *bas bleus* to the amateurs of literature of both sexes, I will point out the great advantage in society which *bas bleus* have over professed authors and authoresses. 'Blue stockings,' who write and read for pleasure, not profit, can afford to cull the richest flowers from the garden of their fancy in order to decorate their conversation. But not so the author or authoress:—they, as they write probably either to procure a necessary addition to their income, or even perhaps to obtain a subsistence for themselves and family, cannot afford to exhaust in so-

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ciety that produce of their imagination which is requisite for their works. The florist in Covent garden market, whose flowers are in greatest profusion there, does not probably spare his own wife even a single sprig of geranium to adorn her bosom; and authors and authoresses, while 'blue stockings' are splendid and eloquent in their conversation, deny to theirs the brilliancy that might teach it to charm. I have often pitied authors, when I have seen them exhibited on these occasions in what are called conversationes, and expected to become what Dr. Johnson calls 'intellectual gladiators,' and have wondered at the wonder expressed, that men who could write so well should talk so ill; when the truth is probably, in the first place, that they do not choose to exhaust their minds in society; in the next, that the mind which is often at full stretch in the study, requires relaxation

in the drawing-room; and therefore they rather shun than court literary converse; while the love of display, which causes men and women of letters to delight so much in literary subjects, being gratified in authors on a wider and a prouder field, they have not in company the same motive to intellectual exertion."

"Then, my dear sir, you would not have professed authors and authoresses invited to blue-stocking parties, because they are of no use when they are there?"

"Pardon me. I would have every attention possible paid to talents, and at least in one point of view. Authors and authoresses are useful and ornamental too on such occasions; for every one feels a desire to see the being whose works have either interested or enlightened the world."

"Then I think," replied Emma, "that authors and authoresses are the

costly heavy chairs in a drawing-room, which are there to be looked at only, and not used; while blue stockings of both sexes are the gilt cane chairs, which are set promiscuously about the apartment, for use as well as show, and formed of a lighter material."

"Bless me, child!" cried Mrs. Castlemain, who, lost in reverie, had only heard part of what had passed, "what are you saying about *bas bleus?* I hope you are not going to set up for one!"

"Dear grandmother," returned Emma, "I have a shrewd suspicion that I am one already: at least I shall henceforth take all *bas bleus* under my protection."

"What! Mrs. Felton and all, Emma?" archly asked Mr. Egerton.

"Yes, sir, certainly; for I think them very harmless and even commendable persons; for their greatest crime seems

to

to be, preferring having full to having empty minds; literary conversation to gossip, scandal, and cards; nor do they do any thing which you and I and Mr. Egerton and St. Aubyn do not do every day."

"Perhaps not," replied Mrs. Castlemain: "still there is such a prejudice against blue stockings that I should be very sorry to hear you called by the name."

Emma was going to answer in a way that would not have pleased Mrs. Castlemain, and with more sarcasm on the prejudices of the world in general than would have become her age, her ignorance in many respects, or her relative situation to the speaker: but recollecting herself, and put on her guard perhaps by a look from Mr. Egerton, she replied, affectionately hanging over Mrs. Castlemain's chair as she spoke, "I shall en-

deavour, dear grandmother, to avoid deserving to be called any thing that you disapprove, and my highest wish will always be to please you."

Mrs. Castlemain kissed her affectionately as she said this, but suddenly rose up and left the room in tears, affected probably at the consciousness, that had the unhappy Agatha received from her the same judicious education and control which had been the safeguard of her more fortunate orphan, she might have been blessed with meeting from her the same respectful and affectionate deference to her will, and been at that moment free from those self-upbraidings that in solitude and secrecy too often invaded her peace.

But to leave my heroine for a little while, and return to St. Aubyn. Part of the story was undoubtedly true. St. Aubyn

her brother, excited in her such even girlish gaiety, as she sat by the side of her beloved son, who had hired for the occasion a low chaise, and a horse warranted steadiest of the steady, that she called a frequent and sometimes sympathizing smile to the now grave countenance of her companion, who, since he had been banished the dear society at the White Cottage, had felt a void at his heart, and a propensity to silence and abstraction, which were before unknown to him. But whatever were St. Aubyn's cares, the sweetness and benevolence of his nature always forbad him to make them a source of pain, or even uncomfortableness, to others; and nothing could be more foreign to his feelings than that selfishness which leads many persons to give way to the expression of their sorrows, even before those to whom the sight of their sufferings is an affliction difficult to endure.

If St. Aubyn ever gave way to grief, it was in the solitude of his own chamber; for, as a social being, he thought he had no right to mix with his fellow-creatures without contributing his share of cheerful conversation, and endeavouring to do all in his power to fill the passing hour with innocent amusement.

After a pleasant and safe journey, though a few gentle screams from Mrs. St. Aubyn, on the road, seemed to imply that she had been in some danger, they arrived at their journey's end time enough for Mrs. St. Aubyn to dress for dinner. And when Mrs. Felton and herself entered the drawing-room, it would have been difficult to say which of the two ladies had taken the most pains at their toilet. The effect which the appearance of each had on the other, was however very different. Mrs. St. Aubyn certainly beheld Mrs. Felton's dress with unqualified admiration;

miration; but the latter could scarcely restrain a smile as she rapidly surveyed the long uncovered and meagre throat of the former, and the flowers which nodded on one side of the flaxen tresses which shaded the once polished brows of the faded but still self-admiring beauty.— Yet Mrs. Felton was used to such exhibitions in town, but she did not expect them in the country; and she expected that Mrs. St. Aubyn's conversation would confirm the impression of her character which her dress had given.

St. Aubyn undoubtedly found more favour in Mrs. Felton's sight than his mother, on his introduction to her; and [illegible]e look and smile with which she receiv[illegible]d his graceful bow, were calculated to [illegible]onvey to him how much she already ap[illegible]eciated him: but their force was lost on [illegible]. Aubyn, and he was only conscious that [illegible]rs. Felton was a good-looking, and miss Spenlove,

Spenlove, her companion, an ill-looking woman.

But as he sat opposite to Mrs. Felton at dinner, he could not but discover that she had very fine eyes, though he was unconscious of what was visible to every one else, how often those eyes were turned expressively towards him, reminding one of the simile, "as on impassive eie the lightnings play." In vain too did the fair widow court every possible opportunity of carving,th at she might show the beauty of her hands and arms, which were uncovered to the very extremity of fashion. St. Aubyn did not notice them; but, unconscious of her motive, headmired within himself that attentive politene which made her willing to take so muc trouble to help and please other people.

After dinner, Mrs. Felton introduce literary conversation, and brought in he taste and understanding in aid of he

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personal graces: but her evident wish to show off, counteracted her power of pleasing him in this instance, and St. Aubyn would have admired her more had she not talked so well. But the singularity of taste in the auditor for whom she talked was wholly unsuspected by Mrs. Felton, who, having displayed her own powers and gratified her own vanity sufficiently, thought it was incumbent on her at length to gratify the vanity of her intended captive; and before the evening ended she took care to insinuate to him that the fame of his literary talents had reached her, and she hoped that he would indulge her during their tour with a sight of some of his beautiful verses.

Nothing but St. Aubyn's surprise could exceed his confusion at being thus invested with the dignity of authorship, and told of the celebrity of his literary talents; for he was not conscious that his having

written

written at all was known beyond the dear circle at Mrs. Castlemain's, and he gazed on Mrs. Felton with looks of wonder, confusion, and inquiry.

"Who can have so much misrepresented me and my pretensions to you, madam?" said St. Aubyn, blushing deeply.

"Misrepresented!" exclaimed Mrs. Felton. "Fie, Mr. St. Aubyn! With that ingenuous countenance, how is it possible you can be so deceitful? However modest your pretensions may be, Mrs. Selby assures me she has seen very beautiful verses written by you on different occasions:—but I see, Mr. St. Aubyn, that you "write verse by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

"However the verse on these occasions, madam," replied St. Aubyn, "may have been written, I am sure it must have been seen by stealth, as I never gave a copy of it to any one but my mother."

"But

"But in the first place you own that you have written?"

"I do,—a few schoolboy's verses."

"In the next place, you plead guilty to having given a copy to Mrs. St. Aubyn?"

"Certainly."

"And you know there is such a thing as *parental pride*; and Mrs. St. Aubyn, in the amiable pride of her heart, showed these stanzas so given to some of her friends, and these friends mentioned them with the praise they deserved to me.—Have I not clearly made out my case, Mr. St. Aubyn?—Verdict against the defendant, who is adjudged to pay a fine of so many stanzas into the Muses' court."

"A severe judgement," replied St. Aubyn, "when the poverty of the condemned is considered,—and I move for an arrest of judgement."

"What is the matter?" said Mrs. St. Aubyn, drawing her chair close to her son's.

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"The matter is, that Mr. St. Aubyn is called upon, as a punishment for his offences, to write some poetry, and he wishes his sentence to be revoked."

"My son refuse to write poetry! Well, that is droll indeed. Why, he writes such beautiful poetry!—Oh, I could show you, madam, such sweet things!"

"Admirable! just what I wished! These 'sweet things' are what I want to see; but Mr. St. Aubyn looks as if he would forbid you to show them."

"What! when he knows I wish to show them? No; Henry never denied me any thing yet, and I think he will hardly begin now."

St. Aubyn bowed to his mother with a look and smile of affection, and, seeing the display of his manuscripts was unavoidable, withdrew to another part of the room.

From Mrs. Felton's severity of criticism

St.

St. Aubyn had little to fear; for to him she was disposed to be particularly indulgent, as his person and manners were likely to make his poetry appear even faultless in the eyes of a female critic.

Henry St. Aubyn was above six feet in height; but the fine proportions of his form made it almost impossible for any one to deem him too tall: and now that all his features had acquired their due size, the beauty of his face, though not as perfect, was as striking as that of his figure. Still, his beauty was chiefly the charm of countenance and expression, heightened by a rich and ever mantling bloom, the result of health, temperance, and exercise. His manners, though he had seen little of the world, were the manners of a finished gentleman; for they had been modelled on his father's; and in those of his most intimate associate Mr. Egerton, he had a daily example of the

politeness

politeness and graceful attention of the old court, as it is called, without any of its formality; and while his lofty and dignified carriage seemed to speak him born to command, the affectionate gentleness of his manner, and the mildness of his address, spoke him eager to oblige and willing to obey.

"What a highly gifted creature it is!" said Mrs. Felton, wiping a tear from her eye, as she read some lines, by St. Aubyn, to the memory of his father.

"Henry! come hither, Henry," cried the delighted mother: "see, see! you have made Mrs. Felton shed tears!"

Henry obeyed the summons, and *saw* tears in the fine eyes of Mrs. Felton; but he either did not see, or would not see, the hand which she held out to him, and which he ought to have pressed or kissed according as his inclinations prompted.

"Here," said Mrs. Felton, "take

away

away your odious verses—I wish I had not seen them!"

"Odious verses! and wish you had not seen them!" cried the literal Mrs. St. Aubyn—"well—that is funny!"

"But very true; for they will make me out of love with every thing else of the kind for ages to come. They are so beautiful, that I shall be as fastidious in future as I have hitherto been indulgent."

"There, Henry! do you hear?" asked Mrs. St. Aubyn.

"Yes, madam, and would I could *believe* what I hear!"

"You may, for I never flatter—not even myself."

"Nor do I: therefore I must think that your kindness rather than your judgement speaks."

"May be so," replied Mrs. Felton; "but I trust that the world will some day or other decide between you and me.

Mr. St. Aubyn," added she, lowering her voice and looking archly at him, " these are very pretty lines entitled ' To Emma, aged twelve years, on her birth-day.' I wonder how you will write ' To Emma, aged *eighteen?* ' "

" ' To Emma, aged eighteen,' I shall probably not write at all," replied St. Aubyn blushing.

" Perhaps not," returned Mrs. Felton with quickness, and heaving a sigh as she spoke; " and in that case she will be a more enviable object than if you *had* written."

" I do not exactly understand you," said Henry.

" No matter," was the answer; and the artillery of glances, sighs, occasional pressures of the soft white hand on the sleeve of his coat, were again played off on the still insensible St. Aubyn, who when they retired for the night kept re-

peating

peating to himself till he dropped asleep, "What could she mean? and why would she not explain herself?"

Had she not contrived to occupy his mind by this affected mystery, St. Aubyn would not have thought of Mrs. Felton at all. However, she had contrived to make him think of her whether directly or indirectly, and that was a point gained; and had Mrs. Felton been sure she had done so, she would have been of the same opinion, and looked forward with some certainty to occupying his attention and thoughts still more.

The next morning the whole party were to begin their tour through Cumberland and Westmorland. It consisted of Mrs. Felton and her companion, the St. Aubyns, Mr. and Mrs. Selby, and Miss Travers a young lady on a visit to the latter. At nine the carriages drove to the door, consisting of Mrs. Felton's

landaulet and the one-horse chaises of Mr. Selby and St. Aubyn.

As Mrs. Felton it was known preferred a chaise to her own carriage, it was resolved that Mrs. Selby, miss Spenlove and miss Travers should go in the landaulet, accordingly they took their seats and drove off from the door before Mrs. Felton, who had been writing letters, was equipped for her journey; and before she came down stairs St. Aubyn had handed his mother into his chaise, and was preparing to follow the carriage. Nothing could exceed Mrs. Felton's astonishment and mortification at finding, when she reached the door, that instead of requesting leave to drive her in his chaise, he was already contentedly seated by the side of his own mother and preparing to drive off, as regardless of her as if he had never seen her! To such neglect and indifference she had never been

accustomed,

accustomed, and knew not how to endure it; and her countenance assumed so gloomy an expression, that even Mr. Selby, who was not the most penetrating of men, discovered the cause of her disquietude; and calling to St. Aubyn to stop, he in a low voice asked Mrs. Felton whether she would not oblige Mr. St. Aubyn by taking his mother's place beside him, while he would condemn himself, for the sake of his young friend, to the pain of relinquishing her society. At this speech, which soothed her wounded self-love, her countenance brightened, and she allowed Mr. Selby to oblige St. Aubyn by making the proposal: but what could exceed her astonishment and angry mortification when St. Aubyn returned for answer, that he must beg leave to decline the honour intended him, as his mother was so fearful in an open carriage that he knew she would be mise-

rable

rable if driven by any one but himself, as to his driving she had been accustomed!"

Too much provoked to speak, Mrs. Felton seated herself beside Mr. Selby, and followed the other chaise in perturbed silence, debating in her own mind whether she should not show her sense of St. Aubyn's rudeness in preferring his mother's comfort to her society, by treating him with disdain. But in the first place he was the *only beau*, therefore she could not *afford* to affront him: and in the next place she felt conscious, that by seeming to resent his indifference she should only gratify his vanity by proving that indifference gave her pain: therefore, before they had gone two miles she had recovered her good humour. Mr. Selby, who had waited in patient silence till the clouds of mortified vanity had dispersed, now led her into conversation, and took occasion on her

making

making some inquiries concerning St. Aubyn, to panegyrize his filial piety amongst his other virtues, of which, he said, his refusal to have the honour and happiness of driving her was another instance; and Mrs. Felton, gratified to find she had been sacrificed to an habitual and therefore irresistible duty, forgot all her displeasure, and made numberless inquiries concerning St. Aubyn's age and expectations in life.

"But who is that Emma," said she, "to whom he has written verses?"

"Oh! a little girl with whom he has been educated."

"But is she still a little girl?" And Mr. Selby, who had forgotten the insensible lapse of years, answered "Yes; her age is only thirteen or fourteen."

"But who and what is she?"

"The heiress of the honourable Mrs. Castlemain."

"But

"But what did St. Aubyn mean, think you, by saying in answer to a remark of mine, on my mentioning his verses 'To Emma, aged twelve,' 'To Emma, aged eighteen, I should probably not write at all'?"

"That he should not dare to take the liberty of writing to her at that age."

"And why not?"

"Because he is poor, and utterly dependent on a capricious uncle; and she is a rich heiress."

"Oh! that is all that he meant, is it?" replied Mrs. Felton; "I suspected that he meant much more." And she immediately fell into a pleasant reverie, of which St. Aubyn was certainly the object.

It was the intention of the party to go to Cockermouth, and thence to Cromack Water and Buttermere, whence they were to make the complete tour of the Lakes, ending it at Ulswater. When they stopped

to

to bait the horses, and explore some of the fine scenery on the road from Carlisle to Cockermouth, Mrs. Felton eagerly approached Mrs. St. Aubyn, and offering her her arm as she did so, regretted having been so long deprived of her society, declaring at the same time her resolution not to undergo a similar privation again. This speech, which Mrs. St. Aubyn received with smiles of unexpected satisfaction, was overheard by Mr. Selby with wonder and mortification; for he could not help thinking that his conversational powers were quite equal, if not superior, to Mrs. St. Aubyn's; and as he was a simple-minded straightforward man, as the phrase is, he had no suspicion that Mrs. Felton was saying what she did not think.

"I have a proposal to make to you, my dear madam," added Mrs. Felton; "which is, that you will do me the honour of going with me, when we resume

ourjourney, in my landaulet, as you are apt, I find, to be alarmed in an open carriage."

"Dear me, you are vastly obliging! I am sure I should prefer going in the landaulet, and then my son may have the honour and happiness of driving you."

"Me! Oh, by no means; that would entirely defeat my purpose; which is, to procure myself more of your company. Therefore, if he pleases, miss Spenlove shall be Mr. St. Aubyn's companion, and dear Mrs. Selby go with you and me, while miss Travers takes my place in Mr. Selby's chaise."

From Mrs. Felton's decisions there was usually no appeal; and as his mother looked delighted at the marked and flattering attention of Mrs. Felton, and wished to accept her offer, St. Aubyn cheerfully acquiesced; though miss Travers, who was a very pretty girl, and therefore perhaps not fixed upon by the fair widow to accom-

accompany St. Aubyn, would have been better pleased if the latter had not been so quiescent, but had insisted on driving her instead of miss Spenlove.

Mr. Selby meanwhile said nothing,—but he thought the more,—and wondered within himself to hear Mrs. Felton professing such eagerness to enjoy the conversation of a woman who, but a few hours ago, she declared was as insipid as she was fantastical! "Well, it is very strange," thought Mr. Selby; for her refusal to be driven by St. Aubyn had completely succeeded in blinding the simple-minded Mr. Selby to her real motives of action; and he resolved to consult his wife on the subject, as she prided herself on her sagacity, and had persuaded him to think very highly of it also.

At length the horses were refreshed, the scenery sufficiently explored, and Mr.

Selby

Selby handed Mrs. St. Aubyn and Mrs. Felton into the landaulet, and then his wife; who, as she seated herself, stooped down, and laying her finger on the side of her nose, (a habit which she had,) significantly and sarcastically said to her husband in a low tone of voice, " Oh ho, is it so?" a jingle she was fond of. And on this expressive but mysterious couplet, as it may be called, Mr. Selby mused for at least half an hour; but recollecting that it was deemed unmanly to be curious, the vice of curiosity being said to be exclusively that of the other sex, he resolved to wait patiently till bed-time for an explanation of what Mrs. Selby's penetration had discovered, and valued himself not a little on being a man, and consequently not at all curious. How often is one reminded of the fable of the Sculptor and the Lion!

During

During the ride his sagacious wife was much amused at observing how completely "dear Mrs. Selby," as Mrs. Felton affectedly called her, was neglected for the new acquaintance Mrs. St. Aubyn; and she was very eager to arrive at her journey's end, in order to indulge herself in another "Oh ho!" proof of her penetration.

"My dear madam," said Mrs. Felton with great tenderness of manner, "believe me, I consider you as a sort of cousin!"

"Dear me, do you! How so?" said the flattered Mrs. St. Aubyn.

"Oh, not without reason. Lady Mary St. Aubyn, your Mr. St. Aubyn's mother, was second cousin to my Mr. Felton: therefore, by marriage, you and I are certainly cousins."

"Dear me! to be sure so we are," replied

plied the delighted Mrs. St. Aubyn; "are we not, Mrs. Selby?"

"Oh ho!" replied Mrs. Selby, and looking very arch, "and pray what relation then is Henry to you, Mrs. Felton?"

"I protest, I, I never considered," said Mrs. Felton in some confusion.

"But why, my dear madam," continued Mrs. Selby, "is it necessary for you to discover a relationship to Mrs. St. Aubyn in order to account for your sudden affection for her——"

"No, certainly not," answered Mrs. Felton.

"O dear me!" said Mrs. St. Aubyn.

"There is," resumed Mrs. Selby, "a sympathy, a natural adhesion between some persons, stronger than any which are the result of blood. The ivy, dear ladies, clings much more closely to the oak than any of its own saplings do; and I am convinced

vinced that the cause of your growing attachment will make it much stronger than if relationship had really any thing to do with it."

"You are very figurative in your language, Mrs. Selby," said Mrs. Felton conscious that she saw through her designs.

"Oh! there is nothing like a simile to illustrate one's meaning. But which of you in this case is the ivy?—*You*, Mrs. St. Aubyn, resemble it in one respect; that is, in being an evergreen: but sober green is not smart enough for your taste; no, you would rather be likened to the China rose, that blooms even in winter."

Not one word of this conversation was thoroughly understood by Mrs. St. Aubyn: however, she bowed and smiled, and said "Dear me!" as if she did understand it; though she was not at all sure that by comparing her to a blooming rose, Mrs.

Mrs. Selby did not mean a sarcasm on her rouge.

Luckily for the maintenance of Mrs. Felton's good humour, the conversation was soon interrupted by their arrival at Cockermouth; for Mrs. Felton feared Mrs. Selby's sarcastic penetration, and she was not likely to be backward in the use of it on this occasion, as she in her heart disliked that lady; for whenever there was no other gentleman present, the fair widow, whose aim was universal conquest, and who always kept her fire-arms inorder by constant exercise, used to flirt most unmercifully with the simple-minded Mr. Selby; and to use a vulgar but expressive phrase, the jealous wife was now paying off old scores, while Mrs. Felton was not backward to return the dislike which she felt conscious of exciting; and she spoke of and to her hostess by the name of "dear Mrs. Selby"

on the same principle that we often throw perfumes about a room in order to hide an unpleasant smell.

At length, after the duties of the toilet were gone through, the company assembled to a late dinner, and St. Aubyn saw in the happy countenance of his mother an expression of satisfied and conscious importance which he had not for years beheld on it; and as he was certain that she derived it from Mrs. Felton's marked attentions to her, he felt grateful to that lady for the benevolence which dictated them.

"But is it benevolence?" thought St. Aubyn, for he sometimes had a suspicion that Mrs. Felton was laughing at his mother; as spite of his filial piety, his uncle's just though coarse raillery had so often held her up in his presence to deserved ridicule, that he could not help fearing this superabundant passion for

her

her society which Mrs. Felton evinced was founded on a wish to make her what is denominated a butt; for St. Aubyn had no suspicion that it was through his mother that the fair widow was aiming at him; and watchful and suspicious and pensive, he sat down to dinner as before opposite to Mrs. Felton. But, with all his distrustful vigilance, he saw nothing in her manner to his mother but what demanded his grateful approbation.

Mrs. Felton evidently endeavoured to give her consequence, and she succeeded. She talked to her of her former residence near London, of the birth-day and the birth-day balls, of lady Mary St. Aubyn, her husband's mother. And Mrs. St. Aubyn, who in her brother's presence had always the appearance of a frightened fool, thus encouraged, resumed the ease and gaiety natural to her; and her son, who had never seen her to such advantage be-

fore, and was now convinced he had undervalued his mother's talents, felt the liveliest gratitude to that benevolent woman, as he now believed she might really be, who had thus gratified his filial affection, and caught himself several times saying mentally, "She is certainly very beautiful!"

Never for an instant did a suspicion of Mrs. Felton's motives come across the mind of St. Aubyn. But Mr. Selby was now become more enlightened, for he had seen his wife alone; and having been informed by her of the plan of operations which was going forward, the corners of his good-humoured mouth were during dinner dimpled with more arch meaning than usual, and though he did not give utterance to any "Oh ho s" he looked even more of them than Mrs. Selby herself.

Not but that it required all his confidence in his wife's penetration to be entirely

tirely convinced of the truth of what she asserted; for instead of directing her discourse to St. Aubyn, and paying him those pointed attentions which he had witnessed the first day they met, Mrs. Felton talked less to him than she did to any one else; and her seducing looks, her *agaceries* as they are called in French, were so exclusively directed to himself, that he began to fear his wife would be jealous again.

But Mr. Selby was not aware that St. Aubyn, being opposite to Mrs. Felton, could see her every look and motion; and that the play of her countenance while speaking to him, and the graceful bend of her finely formed head and neck while leaning towards him, with the occasional display of her fine hand and arm, could not escape St. Aubyn's notice, especially as now he was become unconsciously interested in her from her attention

to

to his mother; and they were more likely to have their full effect on him, from not being *apparently* intended to captivate him; while ever and anon she addressed Mrs. St. Aubyn in a tone and manner so kind and so respectful, that Mrs. St. Aubyn's countenance was quite radiant with pleasure, and she forgot there was such a person in the world as her formidable brother.

During the course of the evening Mrs. Felton was asked to sing; and having immediately complied with the request, she sung the following song:

The soft blooms of summer are fair to the eye,
Where brightly the soft silver Medway glides by;
And rich are the colours which autumn adorn,
Its gold chequer'd leaves, and its billows of corn.

But dearer to me is the pale lonely rose,
Whose blossoms in winter's dark season unclose;
Which smiles in the rigour of winter's stern blast,
And smooths the rough present by signs of the past.

And thus when around us afflictions dark power
Eclipses the sunshine of life's glowing hour,
While drooping, deserted, in sorrow we bend,
O sweet is the presence of one faithful friend!

The crowds whom we smiled with when gladness was ours,
Are summer's bright blossoms, and autumn's gay stores;
But the friend on whose breast we in sorrow repose,
That friend is the winter's lone beautiful rose.

Mrs. Felton did not increase her power over St. Aubyn by singing; for though she sung with taste and science, she only recalled to his recollection a sweeter voice, and tones which he dearly loved; and for a few moments the White Cottage and its beloved inhabitant swam before his glistening eye. He soon however recovered himself; and suppressing a deep sigh, he hoped Mrs. Felton would be more generous than to excite their wishes by a proof of her musical talents, and then

refuse

refuse to gratify still further the wish she had excited; and as he said this, there was so much softness in the expression of his eyes, the result of recent recollections, that Mrs. Felton flattered herself his evident emotion was caused by her, and that the look which accompanied his speech was also caused by the feeling of tenderness with which she had inspired him.

"You overrate my musical talents," said Mrs. Felton modestly; "but, such as they are, you and this good company may command them; and I hope miss Spenlove will join me in a duet."

"Certainly, if you desire it," replied miss Spenlove, "and I shall at least be an excellent foil to you."

"Ridiculous!" said Mrs. Felton; and she said right, as my readers will also say when it suits me to give a short history of miss Spenlove. As soon as miss Spenlove had given her consent to sing, Mrs.

Mrs. Felton fixed on a duet, which was received with more applause even than the song had been; and it was evident even to the most untutored ear in the company, that, so far from being a foil to Mrs. Felton, miss Spenlove's voice was of a richer and finer tone than her friend's, and her delivery of it proved her a performer of great excellence. She could not, however, be prevailed upon to sing any thing but a second to Mrs. Felton, and the latter was again requested to favour the company alone.

"But pray," said Mr. Selby, "who wrote the words you have just been singing?"

"Well, Mr. Selby," cried miss Spenlove, "I am surprised you should ask. I thought you must suspect, if you did not *know*—that they are ——"

"Hush! hush! you foolish woman," said Mrs. Felton, putting her hand before miss Spenlove's mouth.

"No,

"No, I will speak," exclaimed she: "the words are this dear creature's!"

"O fie!" cried Mrs. Felton, as well she might if she had valued truth; for though Mrs. Felton wished them to pass for hers, as she had the reputation of never singing any words but her own, they were in reality the production of a friend, who did not value himself on them, and was contented to let them pass as productions by Mrs. Felton. It is to be supposed that when the company heard that the songs were Mrs. Felton's, they were so complaisant as to admire them.

"And who composed the music?" asked St. Aubyn.

"Oh! the music is—" replied Mrs. Felton.

"By the same person, I suspect, that wrote the words."

"You may say so," said miss Spenlove. And indeed with equal truth so he

might; for the tunes were both old tunes; but, as they were not much known, by a few judicious alterations by miss Spenlove, and some pretty cadences and shakes well introduced by Mrs. Felton, they passed for the original compositions of that lady, and were handed about in MS. in fashionable circles, as little *chef-d'œuvres* by the honourable Mrs. Felton.

"What a monopolizer of talent you are!" said St. Aubyn.

"A monopolizer!" exclaimed Mrs. Selby: "it is well you did not call my fair friend a regrater too."

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. St. Aubyn, "what is a regrater?"

"One," answered Mrs. Selby quickly, "who buys up other persons' commodities, and retails them according to their own fashion and their own price."

"Well, well," said Mr. Selby hastily, alarmed

alarmed at his wife's coarseness, (for he well knew her suspicions,) "considering you are a woman and therefore can know nothing of business, the explanation, though not a correct one, is a tolerably good one, and I shall not take the trouble to amend it, but beg our friends to indulge us with some more singing."

Henry St. Aubyn had listened to Mrs. Selby's observation, and seen Mr. Selby's alarm with ill-disguised astonishment. It seemed to him so necessary for a woman to write verses, or compose music, in order to be either charming or estimable, that he never suspected it possible for a gentlewoman to forfeit the indispensable requisites of truth and honesty, in order to obtain the reputation of being so gifted. He therefore unwillingly attributed Mrs. Selby's evidently intended sarcasm to the spite of an envious woman, while his admiration of Mrs. Felton was increased

 by

by the temper with which she bore the imputation, and consented to sing again.

"Might I be allowed to choose your song?" said miss Spenlove fawningly.

"Certainly you shall," replied Mrs. Felton with apparent kindness; "for no one will dispute the excellence of your judgement, and you certainly know which song I sing best."

St. Aubyn did not know it; but the rancour which Mrs. Selby had excited Mrs. Felton vented thus on poor miss Spenlove, who had once been a professional singer, and had taught music; but who having on an accession of property commenced woman of fashion, had not strength of mind enough to like to be reminded of her former situation. Miss Spenlove therefore blushed, from mixed feelings excited by this masked battery, which "this dear creature," as she had just called her, had opened upon her;

her; but returning good for evil, she requested her to sing the song she was famous for singing with such irresistible pathos; "though indeed," added she, "I wonder you can have the heart to sing it at all, as the unhappy writer was most fatally in love and...."

"No more on that subject," replied Mrs. Felton, affecting to sigh very deeply, "for I wish to sing my best;" and she began the following stanzas, which she had adapted to an old Scotch melody:

Then be it so, and let us part,
Since love like mine has fail'd to move thee;
But do not think this constant heart
Can ever cease, ingrate, to love thee.
No—spite of all thy cold disdain,
I'll bless the hour when first I met thee,
And rather bear whole years of pain
Than e'en for one short hour forget thee.
Forget thee! No.

Still Memory, now my only friend,
Shall with her soothing art endeavour

My

My present anguish to suspend,
By painting pleasures lost for ever.
She shall the happy hours renew,
When full of hope and smiles I met thee,
And little thought the day to view
When thou wouldst wish me to forget thee.
Forget thee! No.

Yet, I have lived to view that day,
To mourn my past destructive blindness,
To see now turn'd with scorn away
Those eyes once fill'd with answering kindness.
But go—farewell! and be thou blest,
If thoughts of what I feel will let thee:
Yet, though thy image kills my rest,
'Twere greater anguish to forget thee.
Forget thee! No.

"Brava! brava!" cried Mr. Selby, when Mrs. Felton had finished her song.

"I think," said St. Aubyn gravely, and conceiving by what miss Spenlove had said that the song had been addressed to her friend, I think a man who could love as well as the poor man who wrote those lines

lines must have loved, ought not to have loved in vain; but it seems he did; and he also complains of encouragement given and then withdrawn." St. Aubyn said this with a severity of manner which Mrs. Felton, spite of her aptitude to flatter herself, could not impute to apprehensive jealousy merely, but was obliged to see in it an implied censure of suspected coquetry; and she replied as composedly as she could, that men were very apt to flatter themselves, and to fancy encouragement given where none was intended.

"True, very true," observed Mrs. St. Aubyn, looking, or trying to look, wise; "I have often found it so to my cost. But, poor man! I should like to know what became of the gentleman who wrote that song:—I hope he did not drown or shoot himself for love!"

"I hope not too," said Mrs. Selby,

"for that would have shown he was more in earnest than such a jilting mistress would have deserved; for you know, Mrs. St. Aubyn, our friend Hudibras says,

> 'If a man hang, or blow out his brains,
> The deuce is in him if he feigns.'"

"Upon my word, madam, I have no friend of that name," replied Mrs. St. Aubyn, "at least not that I recollect: to be sure, when I lived in town, I had many foreigners on my visiting list, and this person might be one of them."

St. Aubyn blushed—Mrs. Selby bit her lip—while Mrs. Felton kindly said,

"I protest, my dear madam, I know no more of Mrs. Selby's friend Hudibras than you do; and indeed it is a book not usually liked by ladies, and you served Mrs. Selby quite right in affecting not to understand her allusion."

St. Aubyn, though grateful to Mrs.

Felton for this attempt to veil Mrs. St. Aubyn's mistake, could not allow even his mother to be defended at the expense of truth; he therefore replied,

"I am sure, my dear madam, that my mother had not the intention which you obligingly impute to her; especially as, though she does not know the poem of Hudibras by name, she is familiar with many passages in it, for my poor father was fond of quoting Hudibras; and you must remember," added he, addressing his mother, "how much you used to admire one burlesque simile which he was often repeating—

'Now, like a lobster boil'd, the morn
From black to red began to turn—'"

"Dear me! yes, to be sure I do; and that was by Hudibras, was it?"

St. Aubyn finding it was a hopeless

case to attempt to set her right, sighed and was silent; but no one even *smiled* at Mrs. St. Aubyn's mistake. The filial piety of her son cast such a shield over her on all occasions, that when he was present it would have seemed sacrilegious to make her an object of ridicule; and even Mrs. Selby, who, because Mrs. Felton seemed to protect Mrs. St. Aubyn, felt inclined to attack her, was awed by respect for the son's feelings into forbearance toward the mother: and Mrs. Selby took advantage of the temporary silence to change the conversation by observing,

"Your father, Henry, was a most amiable man! and I shall regret his early loss to the end of my existence. However, my dear boy," squeezing St. Aubyn's hand affectionately, "he survives still in you. Do you not think, Mrs. St.

Aubyn,

Aubyn, that your son is an improved likeness of his father?"

"My Mr. St. Aubyn was a very handsome man also," she replied; while her son's deep blushes at this implied compliment to his beauty called forth some good natured raillery, and the evening terminated in mirth and good humour.

The next day Mrs. Felton persisted in going in the landaulet with Mrs. St. Aubyn and Mrs. Selby, though St. Aubyn requested the honour of driving her; but she was gratified at his having made the request; and when they arrived at Buttermere, she accepted his offered arm, and the assistance of his hand in passing miry paths and pieces of projecting rock: and sometimes while he sat down to sketch the most striking parts of the scenery, she leaned over him as he did so, and occasionally leant her arm on his shoulder.

"Oh ho!" said Mrs. Selby to her husband as she observed this familiarity; and Mrs. St. Aubyn, as she delightedly gazed on them, asked miss Spenlove in a whisper, if she did not think they would make a very handsome picture.

As the weather was fine, and Buttermere and Cromack Water were well worth visiting again and again, they did not quit the banks of the latter lake till twilight, and then took up their abode for the night in the neighbourhood, that they might return to the same scenes again the next day; Mr. Selby's servants having in the mean while joined them with fishing tackle, and a tent which they could pitch wherever they thought proper.

But late as was the dinner hour, neither the ladies nor the gentlemen sat down to table without changing their dress; and had St. Aubyn continued to distrust Mrs. Felton's motives for behav-

ing

ing with such marked kindness to his mother, the appearance of the latter when she came down to dinner would for ever have lulled his suspicions to rest. Mrs. St. Aubyn appeared in a very elegant lace cap tied under her chin, the gift of Mrs. Felton; and as it was a style of head-dress more becoming her time of life than any cap she was in the habit of wearing, St. Aubyn saw that Mrs. Felton endeavoured to remove rather than promote his mother's follies; and his heart glowed towards her with a fervour that she had never excited in him before, and which all her beauty, all her coquetry, and all her seducing familiarity, would have failed to excite. She had really attacked St. Aubyn on his weak side, if I may call by such a name his attachment to a most foolish mother; and the fair widow was not at all blind to the advantage which she had gained.

As the day had been a day of fatigue, the party separated early. Nothing worth relating took place during the evening, except that Mr. and Mrs. Selby looked a number of oh ho s at each other, on observing several kind and corresponding glances exchanged between the grateful St. Aubyn and the fascinating Mrs. Felton.

The next and the two succeeding days were passed amidst the scenery of Buttermere and Cromack Water, or on the Lakes themselves; and the whole party walked from and to the inn. But as the lake which they meant to visit the next day was at some distance, the carriages were again necessary, and again St. Aubyn requested leave to drive Mrs. Felton, and was graciously permitted to do so, to the petitioner's great satisfaction, as he was become tired of both his companions, miss Travers and miss Spenlove. The former, though very pretty, was very insipid;

sipid; and towards the latter, St. Aubyn, though not at all apt to dislike any one, was inclined to feel something rather resembling aversion.

Miss Spenlove, as I have before said, had once been a teacher of music, and had sung, for hire, in many respectable societies, contented with the honourable distinction of gaining an honest livelihood by virtuous industry; but having become mistress of eight or ten thousand pounds by the death of a distant relation, miss Spenlove wished to set up for a woman of fashion. But to do this was a difficult task as a *noun substantive*; therefore miss Spenlove resolved to become a noun *adjective*; and, by making herself useful to some leader of ton, get herself passed into the circles of high life, as an appendage to the aforesaid leader;—like a *burr* sticking to a velvet petticoat.

At the time when miss Spenlove's good fortune, as she called it, had led her to form this resolution, Mrs. Felton was a leader of the ton; and having known that lady when she was poor, and dependent on her talents for support, miss Spenlove took the first opportunity of calling on her now her style of living was changed, and that she walked no where without a servant behind her. The pretence for calling on Mrs. Felton was, that she had composed a song, hitherto unheard by any one, on purpose for Mrs. Felton's beautiful voice and manner of singing, and miss Spenlove had little doubt but that under the auspices of the fair widow she should move in those circles after which her ambition panted:—not that miss Spenlove was romantic enough to suppose that Mrs. Felton would introduce her into fashionable circles from motives

of kindness:—no, she knew too much of the world and of human nature, and also of Mrs. Felton's nature, to suppose that. But she knew she could make it a traffic of mutual accommodation, and that she could purchase the services which it was not in her power to command.

After miss Spenlove, who was immediately admitted as Mrs. Felton had nothing better to do, had presented her song, which was most graciously received, she told Mrs. Felton that she knew her generous heart would rejoice to hear of her good fortune; that in consequence of it she had given up all professional pursuits, and had made a vow never to sing even gratuitously for any one again, "except," she added, "for *you*, my dear Mrs. Felton, whose musical talent is such as to entitle you to demand an exertion of the best efforts of others."

Mrs. Felton, whose heart was not at all given to rejoice at the good fortune of other people, received the first part of the intelligence very coldly, but heard the other with unfeigned delight, though she could not at first divine why this kind exception was made in her favour.

Miss Spenlove perceived the satisfaction her proposal had given, and went on to the complete furtherance of her project.

"My dear lady," said she, "I know you compose pretty melodies:—perhaps you have some by you to which you would like that I should put a bass. It would give me the greatest pleasure to be of use to you in that way; and perhaps you would sing over with me the song which I have brought."

Mrs. Felton complied; and without at all wounding her self-love, miss Spenlove contrived to give her a most instruc-

tive

tive lesson in singing; and she was too clever not to perceive immediately how useful to her a friend would be who could insure to her fame as a composer, by doing for her what she was too ignorant to do for herself; and reputation as a singer, by teaching her to sing in the first style of excellence without her being at the expense of having a master.

The little melodies were produced; song succeeded to song, duet to duet; graces were noted down for the acquisition of Mrs. Felton, amateur, by the obliging fingers of miss Spenlove, now amateur also; and, after some hours spent by miss Spenlove thus in conferring obligation, she returned home, having at length received obligation in return; for Mrs. Felton begged, till her kind friend miss Spenlove could meet with lodgings enirely to her mind, that she would make

her house her home. And that very night miss Spenlove, who was elderly and ugly, removed to the house of the young and beautiful Mrs. Felton; being qualified to serve at once both for a foil and for a companion.

Nor, though the ladies had no great affection for each other, had their union during three years ever known interruption, so powerful is the tie called mutual convenience: and as miss Spenlove paid Mrs. Felton very handsomely for her board, it was impossible for either lady to think herself more the obliger than the obliged.

But they knew each other too well to add to the tie of interest that of esteem and affection. Mrs. Felton, whose temper was not good, used to vent on her companion the ill-humour she was forced to restrain towards others; and as she

knew

knew miss Spenlove wished it to be forgotten that she had ever been a musical professor, Mrs. Felton used to take a malicious pleasure in alarming her by distant allusions to this circumstance; which in time would have been wholly forgotten, but by miss Spenlove's almost pettish refusals to sing any where but at Mrs. Felton's, as the reason for her refusal was immediately suspected and whispered round the room, with sneers at her foolish pride and affectation.

But miss Spenlove took her revenge amply on Mrs. Felton behind her back for the mortification she endured sometimes in her presence; for she had a custom, in seeming friendship but with real malignity, to extol Mrs. Felton's personal charms and talents in so extravagant a manner to her rivals and acquaintance, as could not fail to provoke her hearers to deny her pretensions to such excelling attrac-

attractions; for few persons can bear to admit the overwhelming superiority of any one; and on such occasions envy with propriety assumes the garb of justice, and may unoffendingly dispute the claims of the person so praised, to such extravagant eulogium. It was very evident therefore that miss Spenlove set up Mrs. Felton in this manner as a ninepin, only to have the pleasure of having her knocked down again;—after which she used with well-feigned concern to hint to Mrs. Felton what envious persons there were in the world! and how strenuously she had asserted her charming friend's rights to universal homage; well-knowing, as she did so, that Mrs. Felton would be more hurt at the consciousness of being attacked, than gratified at being defended by such a person as miss Spenlove.

But it was not by extravagant praise of Mrs. Felton that miss Spenlove had dis-

gusted St. Aubyn; it was only before women that she amused herself in this manner; to men she had a different way of proceeding;—as thus,

"Do you not think, Mr. St. Aubyn, my sweet friend is the most beautiful creature in the world?"

"She is beautiful certainly, madam, but . . . ."

"Oh! I know very well what you would say,—that she looks differently at different times, and that when not a little rouged she is like all women of fashion, rather sallow."

"No indeed, madam," replied St. Aubyn, "I was not going to say any such thing, and I did not know till this moment that Mrs. Felton's colour was not at all times her own."

"Her own!" returned miss Spenlove with a laugh as she meant it to be, but which was any thing *but* a laugh, "her own!

own! yes it is certainly her own, for she bought it with her own money."

But what a sweet figure she is! though to be sure at her time of life it is as well perhaps to grow fat."

"At her time of life, madam!"

"Yes, sir, after thirty it is always advantageous for a woman to get a little *en bon point*;" drawing herself up as she spoke with a proud consciousness of rotundity.

"After thirty! I did not suppose Mrs. Felton was above five and twenty, madam!" replied St. Aubyn.

"I do not wonder at that, sir; many persons have been so deceived; when dressed she certainly looks very young; for her great vivacity and cheerfulness give a youthful expression to her countenance. Not but that her temper is none of the *evenest*. She is *very* irritable at times;—however, I love her so

much,

ch, dear creature! with all her faults, t I cannot help remaining with her, ugh, as I have an independent fortune, idling as she said this,) and could live dsomely *any where* for what I pay rs. Felton for my board, I need not y with her if I did not like it."

"No, to be sure not," replied St. byn, by way of saying something, and gusted with this conversation: still, vever, he felt less angry with miss nlove when he heard she was a woman ndependent fortune, because till she this he had looked upon her as a poor dependant on Mrs. Felton, who vented on her benefactress in this manner the hatred excited in her by a sense of obligation which she felt that she could never repay. Now the case was altered: however, disgust was still the predominant feeling in him towards miss Spenlove;

and though he was in a degree amu
by the ingenious malice with whi
while praising Mrs. Felton's beauty, s
insinuated that her beauty was the res
of art; that though she looked you
she was in reality old; that though s
seemed cheerful and good-humoured, s
was in truth the contrary; still he co
scarcely refrain from putting a stop to
effusion of wormwood mixed up in syr
by asking very seriously whether a
this conversation he was to consider
as Mrs. Felton's friend or her enemy

But as I am quite as much tired of sickening though too natural conversation as St. Aubyn himself, I shall repeat no more of it, but go to pleasanter contemplations; namely, the very different subjects discussed by St. Aubyn and Mrs. Felton when she became his travelling companion. On literature, the arts, mo-

rals, and every thing connected with them, they delighted to converse, and it was with pain that they found themselves arrived at the end of their journey; where Mrs. St. Aubyn beheld with delight, but Mrs. Selby with pain, the mutual satisfaction which beamed in the countenances of Mrs. Felton and St. Aubyn as they declared how pleasant their drive had been; and the expression of interest and pleasure with which St. Aubyn, apparently regardless of every one else, eagerly offered his arm to Mrs. Felton, when they began their walk to the lake.

Till this excursion took place, the first wish of Mrs. St. Aubyn's heart was, that her son should marry miss Castlemain; but now her only ambition was to see him the husband of the honourable Mrs. Felton, while she in fancy beheld herself by

this means reinstated in those gay and fashionable scenes which her own vicious folly had caused her to forgo, but which she had never ceased most bitterly to regret.

No such sanguine expectations for the aggrandizement of St. Aubyn entered into the more penetrating mind of her friend Mrs. Selby. She accurately read and justly appreciated the character of Mrs. Felton; and it was not only from dislike of that lady that she could not bear so precious a votary should do homage at the shrine of her vanity, but also from a conviction that Mrs. Felton in no one point of view was worthy to attach a being so excellent as St. Aubyn; the feeling of esteem for him being even more strong in the heart of Mrs. Selby than aversion to Mrs. Felton; whom she would never have admitted

into

into her house, had she not been related to Mr. Selby's first wife, and had not he in early life been under obligations to Mrs. Felton's father.

To be brief, that evening St. Aubyn retired to rest more charmed than ever with the fascinating widow, especially when his mother, following him to his apartment, told him, almost with tears of joy, that Mrs. Felton had given her a most pressing invitation to visit her in London the ensuing spring, when London would be most full, and she could introduce her into such circles as she ought to be seen in.

"Kind Mrs. Felton!" exclaimed St. Aubyn, kissing his mother affectionately; "she is irresistibly charming; but of all her charms, the greatest she has for me is her affectionate attention to you!"

That night when St. Aubyn laid his

head on his pillow he certainly did not recollect so vividly, nor think of so long as usual, a pair of dark blue eyes peeping at him almost by stealth, between the crimson curtains of a certain pew in a certain church, from under the longest and thickest black eyelashes that ever were seen; while the blushing cheek beneath them was shaded by a large cottage bonnet tied with blue ribbands.

Three weeks had already passed rapidly in exploring the beauties of the lakes, when the party arrived at Keswick or Derwentwater; and as that lake was well known to every one of the party, as neither Mrs. St. Aubyn's house nor purse would allow her to entertain her companions, and as Mr. Hargrave was absent from home, it was resolved that one day only should be spent in revisiting Borrowdale, Watenlath and the other surrounding beau-

ties; and that then, after visiting Bassenthaite and other scenes worthy of notice, they should proceed to Penrith, and devote all the time they could spare to the varied and extensive beauties of Ulswater and its environs. It was not without many tender and many painful recollections that St. Aubyn found himself once more in the vicinity of the White Cottage, and saw the church where, and where only, he had now for weeks beheld the dear companion of his youth and his studies; he therefore seized the first opportunity to steal from his party and mount a hill whence he could discern the chimneys of Mrs. Castlemain's dwelling. And when he returned he was absent and pensive during the remainder of the evening; but so marked had lately been his attentions to Mrs. Felton, that she, blinded by vanity, was sometimes inclined to attribute

tribute his abstraction to love for a present not an absent idol; and of the rest of the party some hoped and some feared the same thing.

Already before Mrs. St. Aubyn's sight swam white and silver favours and bridal finery, and she had nodded and winked and insinuated the same belief into pretty miss Travers, who thought with a sigh that Mrs. Felton was a very lucky woman. But Mrs. Selby, who did not believe the dangerous widow was capable of being in love even with a St. Aubyn, and who thought her only aim was conquest, was alarmed lest the peace of a heart so valuable should be ruined by the wiles of a coquet.

In this instance, however, Mrs. Selby was only right in part. Mrs. Felton had made no vow against marrying again; and if St. Aubyn had been already in

possession

possession of his uncle's immense fortune, she was so charmed with the beauty of his person and the graces of his manner, that she would willingly have resigned her liberty to him, and have been proud to exhibit her handsome husband in the circles of high life. But love in a cottage was not at all to Mrs. Felton's taste; and so miss Spenlove assured Mr. Selby, when he hinted his suspicions of St. Aubyn's attachment to her, when they were alone.

"Pho! nonsense!" said she, "I know her; she is only at her usual tricks. I endeavoured to put the young man on his guard, and tell him what she really is: but he is mighty conceited, and I saw by his look he did not believe me."

Mr. Selby, good man, listened and was astonished; for he had been completely the dupe of miss Spenlove's "sweet creatures" and "dear creatures," and

supposed that she idolized her friend with even blind affection.

"My dear," said he to his wife at night, "would you believe it? I have discovered that miss Spenlove's affection for Mrs. Felton is all put on."

"Oh ho! is it so?" replied Mrs. Selby; "what, have you only now found that out, Mr. Selby?" who, poor man, sighed to think that he should never, if he lived even to the age of Methuselah, be as wise as his wife.

It was now an understood thing that St. Aubyn was always to drive Mrs. Felton, and of course he handed her into the chaise as soon as it drove round. The preference he felt for her society he had no scruple in showing by his manner; and Mrs. Felton, though she had sometimes doubts herself on the subject, was charmed to discover by the looks and

conduct

conduct of the rest of the party, that most of them suspected St. Aubyn, though not yet her declared lover, was on the point of becoming so; and she felt authorized to add to the list of her captives the name of Henry St. Aubyn.

Mrs. Felton had now in a great measure carried her point; still she wished her conquest to be proved past doubt by a regular declaration; and towards this she saw no symptoms of any progress, not that she meant to accept his offer, but most earnestly did she wish to have the honour of refusing it.

"I wish I could excite his jealousy," thought Mrs. Felton, "in order to bring him to the point; but that is impossible, as he can't be jealous of Selby, and there is no other beau." Fortune, however, as if eager to indulge so amiable a wish in this accomplished coquette, sent another beau when she least expected it;

and

and such a beau! no other than the man whom of all others she was the most desirous of charming, and to whom she would most willingly be made captive in return.

Mr. Wanford was at the time I am speaking of the most admired and courted young man in the regions of fashion. Fortunately for him, when he first went to College his fortune was so small and his expectations so trifling, that he knew his only chance of distinction and success in life was having resolution enough to labour to deserve them; and Mr. Wanford had ambition; he had also talents and perseverance: and the same year that he took a very high mathematical degree, he was senior medallist also; while the ensuing year, having cultivated with great assiduity his poetical abilities, his poem on a given subject obtained the prize.

At this climax of his well-deserved celebrity,

lebrity, prosperities of another kind poured in upon him, but luckily too late to interfere with those virtuous habits of application in which poverty had fortified him. An uncle of his father died, and left him heir to a large independent fortune; and at the same time his mother's brother, who had acquired an immense fortune in trade, had interest enough to obtain a peerage; and having no children of his own, the patent was made out with remainder to the son of his sister—this fortunate Mr. Wanford.

It is not to be wondered at that such sudden prosperity should in some measure turn the head of the young and laurelled scholar; and that the expectance of title, and the possession of wealth, should not sit so gracefully on him as on those to whom such things have long been habitual. But to do him justice, he was quite as proud of his

academical

academical as of his other honours; and while he was abroad on his travels he published a volume of poems consisting of some original pieces, and some elegant translations of Greek, and other fragments. This volume, coming as it did from the heir to a barony, and the possessor already of a very fine fortune, was received with much admiration by those ladies and gentlemen who unite literature with fashion. But the return of Mr. Wanford from abroad was anxiously expected not only by all who had read his works, and had heard of his reputation; he was considered as a prize worth trying for by illiterate mothers who had daughters to dispose of, and by widows of small jointures, who only knew that he was rich and lord Erdington's heir. To Mrs. Felton he was welcome, as scholar, poet, heir, and rich man; "and if I ever part with my

liberty

liberty again," she had often said to herself, "it shall be to Mr. Wanford."

Being so highly gifted as I have described him, it was almost unnecessary for him to possess beauty of person or grace of manner: however, he was well made though not tall, and handsome rather than otherwise; and his manners, though rather haughty and important, were generally pleasing, and sometimes even insinuating. Of marrying he had at present not the most distant intention, and he had been so much the object of coquetry, that he was become no mean proficient in the art himself. Such was the man who was now making the tour of the Lakes, accompanied by his only sister, who resided with him, in a carriage of his own construction, which he drove himself, and of which the back part contained his man and his sister's waiting-maid.

Mr. Wanford had not returned to England long before the close of the season for parties in London; and it had so happened that though Mrs. Felton had been invited more than once to meet this gentleman, long the object of her secret wishes, he had either gone away before she had entered, or had come after she had left the house; while, in spite of her repeated invitations to him sent by friends of both parties, he never gratified her so far as to visit her either in a morning or an evening. She had therefore never seen him, nor he her; and when miss Spenlove, who had seen Mr. Wanford arrive, and had heard his name from his servants, announced his arrival to Mrs. Felton at the Inn at Patterdale, the joy she felt was so great as to make her jump off her seat, and exclaim, "The man here whom of all others I am most ambitious

to

to see and know! What a fortunate event!"

"What a fortunate man, you might also have said," observed St. Aubyn with perhaps a little feeling of mortification; while Mrs. St. Aubyn uttered a "Dear me!" in no cheerful tone, and Mrs. Selby drawled out a significant "Oh ho!"

But Mrs. Felton was too much engaged in her own speculations to attend to them. Thought, that rapid traveller, had already gone through all the advantages accruing from meeting Mr. Wanford in such a spot; and could she but be introduced to him, could she but have such opportunities with him as she had had with St. Aubyn, her success seemed sure, her marriage undoubted! But how could she contrive to make herself known to him? "Necessity has no law," says the

the proverb; and if nothing but a bold stroke can succeed, Mrs. Felton is too much a woman of the world to scruple it.

"My dear Mr. St. Aubyn," said Mrs. Felton, "will you do me an essential service?"

"Any thing in my power."

"The gentleman (Mr. Wanford) who is just arrived, lord Erdington's nephew and heir, there is the greatest necessity for my being introduced to: would you then have the great goodness to tell him that Mrs. Felton wishes much to make his acquaintance, and begs the pleasure of seeing him? He knows me by *name* and reputation very well already."

"If then, madam," replied St. Aubyn gravely, "he knows you by name and reputation already, and learns, as no doubt he will do, or indeed as he shall do, (for I will take care of that,) that the honour-

able

able Mrs. Felton is at this inn, it will be his business surely, dear madam, to solicit the honour of knowing you."

"To be sure—certainly," said Mrs. St. Aubyn.

Mrs. Felton, who felt the delicacy of this reproof, blushed deeply both with a sense of shame and of resentment, though she fancied jealousy as much as regard for her dignity had dictated St. Aubyn's reply.

"My dear sir," she replied, forcing a laugh, "where a woman is conscious she confers full as much or more honour than she receives by courting an acquaintance, there surely is no harm in her making the first advances."

"Not to a lady; but indeed I respect you, or any one of your sex, too much to endure the idea of flattering any man's vanity so far as to be the bearer of solicitations from a fair lady to a gentleman, requesting

requesting the pleasure of making his acquaintance."

"Mr. St. Aubyn," cried Mrs. Felton, too determined on her purpose to be withheld from it even by the risk of disgusting her friendly monitor; "there is a *necessity* for my knowing Mr. Wanford, as I have a message to deliver to him; and if you will not repeat to him what I said, I will go and introduce myself."

"Rather than you should do that, madam," said St. Aubyn, "I will, though reluctantly, obey you."

At this moment miss Spenlove entered the room.

"So!" said she, "Mr. Wanford has a lady with him, I find!"

"A lady!" echoed St. Aubyn, immediately returning; while Mrs. Felton [illegible]ushed from alarm, lest the lady should

be

be such a one as to prevent the possibility of her introduction.

"Yes; but it is only his sister."

"His sister!" cried Mrs. Felton pettishly, but with her countenance brightening up; "why could you not say so before? miss Spenlove, and then I should have felt no difficulty in this business; for Mr. St. Aubyn's delicacy will not be shocked by my requesting the honour of knowing miss Wanford."

"Undoubtedly not," he answered, bowing profoundly, and left the room.

"Well, and may I ask who this great gentleman is?" asked Mrs. St. Aubyn in a tone of pique.

"He is a poet, a scholar, a fine gentleman, and the heir to a nobleman," replied Mrs. Felton.

"May be so; but I never heard of him before."

"It would not break his heart if he

knew it," said Mrs. Felton contemptuously; "he is sufficiently known and admired where he wishes to be."

"Then if this be true as you do not know him, it must be because he does not wish to be known and admired by you," sarcastically observed Mrs. Selby.

"Think what you please, ma'am," replied Mrs. Felton angrily.

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. St. Aubyn; "what a fuss there is about this man, who, I am sure if that be he coming yonder, is not half as handsome as my son."

"Ridiculous! beneath my notice!" muttered Mrs. Felton, looking at Mrs. St. Aubyn with such a frown, that she almost fancied it was her brother whom she beheld.

Just then Mr. Wanford passed the window, at which stood miss Travers, who had taken off her riding hat from the

the heat of the weather, and let fall over her shoulders a profusion of fine light hair; while on her cheek not only the "sultry season glowed," but the bloom of healthy and happy eighteen!

Mr. Wanford gazed earnestly at her, and *almost* stopped as he gazed, but recovering himself passed on. Soon however he returned, pretending to call his dog, though his eyes were riveted on the now blushing miss Travers, who from native modesty turned away and went to a remote corner of the room; on which Mr. Wanford repassed the window and disappeared.

"Well, I declare," said Mrs. St. Aubyn, "my dear, you have made a conquest certainly of this Mr. Wanford."

"Ridiculous!" muttered Mrs. Felton.

"Not so ridiculous neither," cried Mrs. St. Aubyn; "for I am sure he had no eyes for any one else."

"That

"That was very certain," observed Mrs. Selby; "and I think it was strange, after your message to his sister, Mrs. Felton, that he should not look for you!"

"Perhaps," said miss Spenlove, "he took miss Travers for my dear friend."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Selby. "Take that young thing for Mrs. Felton? Nonsense!"

"It is not the first time, madam," said miss Spenlove looking grave, "that Mrs. Felton has been taken for a girl of eighteen."

At this moment St. Aubyn put his head into the room, saying, "Miss Wanford desires her compliments to you, madam, and she will wait on you presently." So saying he disappeared, and the party soon after saw miss Wanford walking along a path at a little distance, whither St. Aubyn had been in search of her. However, instead of coming immedi-

ately into the house she passed the window, after having asked of the waiters which way her brother went.

"Very odd that," said Mrs. Selby: "it seems as if she dares not make the acquaintance unsanctioned by her brother."

This remark gave Mrs. Felton as much pain as it was intended to give her; for the elegant widow knew very well, that though generally received in society, there were some squeamish and rigid persons who were not desirous of visiting her; and as Mr. Wanford had hitherto rejected all her advances to acquaintance, it was possible that his sister might be of the latter number. St. Aubyn, meanwhile, ever ready to oblige, was gone to gather some curious grass which he had discovered in a wet ditch behind the inn; a grass of which Mrs. Felton, who studied botany among other things, was desirous of obtaining specimens; and in this ditch

he was standing mid-leg in water when miss Wanford hastened to her brother, who was sitting on a bank and sketching a fine tree on the other side of the hedge under which St. Aubyn was.

"So, Frank!" cried miss Wanford as soon as she saw her brother; "who do you think is here, and has sent the handsomest young man I ever saw to solicit the pleasure of making my acquaintance? No other than Mrs. Felton!"

"What *the* Mrs. Felton ....."

"Yes, her own honourable self."

"Fairly hooked, by Jupiter! Now I must know her whether I would or no," returned Wanford; while St. Aubyn coughed and hemmed very audibly to inform them they were overheard, though he stooped down as he did so, lest the young lady should recognise him and be shocked at finding he had heard her praises of his beauty. But regardless of

St.

St. Aubyn's honourable notice they went on.

"I never could understand why you would not know Mrs. Felton, brother."

"Because, when I found she was so desirous of making my acquaintance, I suspected she had designs on me."

"Well said, my modest brother! and so I suppose you think, in soliciting my acquaintance, all she aims at is yours?"

"To be sure I do."

"And so do I. For, from what I have heard of Mrs. Felton, I do not believe she ever cares an atom for the females of a family, unless she can through them best obtain ascendancy over the males."

Here Mr. St. Aubyn smiled to himself, and again hemmed audibly, though in vain.

"I see you know this sweet enslaver as well as I do, Bell. Well—as I must know her I must; but if marriage be her

end, I can tell her she cannot catch me in that snare; and if her only aim be to make a fool of me as she has done of other men, that I defy her to do. But, pray, have you met?"

"No: I sent word I would wait on her soon; but as I never mean to make an acquaintance till it is approved by you, I chose to consult you first, especially as Mrs. Felton is . . . . ."

"Generally received, Bell, and that is enough for me. I do not wish my sister to set up for being more wise and more virtuous than two-thirds of the world: besides, you know, Bell, you are very desirous to be invited to Mrs. Felton's parties. But come, since the fair widow will attack me, who's afraid? Besides, in her party I suspect is a lovely Hebe of a girl that I should like to be better acquainted with; and I shall have no little fun in playing off this inexperienced

blushing

blushing beauty against this celebrated and dangerous coquette."

So saying they walked towards the inn, leaving St. Aubyn warned and enlightened sufficiently, if he had needed such warning; and not pleased with Wanford for his worldly and convenient morality: for, if it was to be more wise and virtuous than two-thirds of the world to avoid association with women of doubtful reputation, he proved in St. Aubyn's opinion, by not wishing his sister to be thus wise and virtuous, that his sense of propriety was not over nice, and that he was not a very fit guardian for the honour and reputation of a young and pleasing woman.

"And this formidable coquette whom they have thus freely discussed is my amiable friend Mrs. Felton! and this woman whom I so much respected and admired, was really *mean* enough to want to solicit the acquaintance of a man

who,

who, it seems, has purposely hitherto rejected all her overtures to acquaintance! Sure is the saying, that where there is much vanity there is no pride, (virtuous pride I mean)!" And with a feeling of pity not unmixed with contempt for Mrs. Felton, he returned to the inn to change his shoes and stockings, before he joined his companions in a party on the lake.

But new arrangements had taken place during St. Aubyn's absence, in consequence of a violent thunder storm, and it was agreed that in order to lose no time they should take a cold dinner while the bad weather lasted, and when it was over go on the lake, and remain on the water or its banks till the approach of night should force them to return to Penrith, their head quarters.

Mr. and miss Wanford, therefore, when they arrived at the inn, found the party preparing to sit down to dinner; but having

having been graciously met at the door by Mrs. Felton, and being pressed to sit down to their meal by her and Mr. and Mrs. Selby, they complied with the request, and soon felt themselves as much at ease as if they had been old acquaintances. When the dinner was completely served up, and the ladies seated, Mr. Wanford took the chair at the head of the table between Mrs. Selby and Mrs. Felton; on which Mrs. St. Aubyn hastily said, "You have taken my son's place, sir."

"Your son's place, madam!" replied Wanford coldly; "pray, where is he? I have not the honour of knowing him. Oh! I suppose that gentleman at the bottom of the table is your son."

"Dear me! if I ever heard the like! Why, Mr. Selby is as old as I am."

"Not happening to know how old that is, I hope you will excuse me, madam, and

and your son too when he makes his appearance, for I must keep my seat." And this he said with an air as if he felt that the heir of lord Erdington had some right to sit at the head of the table next to the honourable Mrs. Felton.

"Gracious goodness!" whispered Mrs. St. Aubyn to Mrs. Selby, "what airs the man gives himself! I can't abide him. And then for Mrs. Felton not to tell him it was my son's place!"

Wanford, who was only too fond of that mean order of fun denominated quizzing and banter, and to which those who reside in college are but too much addicted, soon discovered that Mrs. St. Aubyn was an excellent subject for this sort of diversion; and perceiving by her fanning herself violently, and other symptoms, that she was displeased, he very coolly exclaimed, leaning towards her as he did so, "Are we not friends?"

"No,

"No, sir," she replied, "nor even acquaintance."

"But I hope we shall be, dear madam," returned Wanford: "no endeavours on my part, I am sure, shall be wanting to bring about so desirable a circumstance. Shall we drink wine together?"

"No, sir, I never drink wine so soon: though stay—yes, I will take half a glass, for I remember my husband's mother, lady Mary St. Aubyn," (whom by the by she always talked of when she wished to impress any one with an idea of her consequence,) "yes, lady Mary used to say that it was rude to refuse to drink wine with any one."

"Lady Mary is a very sensible woman, and here's her good health."

"Good health, sir! Why, did one ever hear the like! The poor soul has been dead these sixteen years."

"Indeed! I am very sorry for it."

 "Sorry!

"Sorry! Why, sir, you did not know her, I dare say."

"Not I, madam; I was only sorry on your account: as you seem so fond of her, you cannot help bringing her into company by head and shoulders."

"Indeed, sir, lady Mary was not a woman to be brought into any company against her will, and those whom she associated with might think themselves honoured; for, sir, lady Mary was none of your upstart yesterday quality; she was of the old and right sort, and a duke's daughter, sir."

"So much the better for her, madam," returned Wanford, who thought this was meant as a sarcasm on his want of family antiquity, and the bought peerage of his tradesman uncle. "So much the better for her. It is a fine thing to be a duke's daughter!" Then, with mock pathos, he added, "I wish I was a duke's daughter!

daughter! but I fear it is impossible for me to be one now."

"Dear me!" whispered Mrs. St. Aubyn to Mrs. Selby, "did you ever hear the like! This your wit and your scholar indeed! Why, he appears to me no better than a fool or a madman!" And while the rest of the party were laughing, spite of themselves, at Wanford's nonsense, St. Aubyn entered the room. There was such an air of command about St. Aubyn's person and manner, that he always inspired strangers at first sight with a sort of involuntary deference; and Wanford, who felt himself irresistibly impelled to laugh at the mother, was as irresistibly impelled to respect the son. When St. Aubyn saw Wanford occupying his usual seat, and that the table seemed completely filled elsewhere, he exclaimed with a smile,

"The table's full,"

On

On which miss Spenlove said,

"Here is a place reserved,"

offering him a vacant seat between herself and miss Travers, which he instantly accepted. But Wanford, with more graciousness than usual, said—"I understand, sir, that I am occupying your usual place, and I earnestly wish to exchange it for that you have now taken."

"Impossible, sir! I know its value too well," he replied, smiling, "to bear to inflict on any one the pain of quitting it."

"And it is, sir, because I feel its value equally," answered Wanford, "that I am resolved not to expose a fellow creature to the misery of regretting it."

"Well, sir, if I must be made happy at another's expense, I must;" and they exchanged seats. Mrs. Felton felt excessive mortification during this dialogue, which in words appeared so flattering to her vanity; for she saw that Wanford,

whose

whose eyes were oftener turned on miss Travers than herself, was glad of an excuse to sit next that young lady; and in St. Aubyn's smile, and his extravagant compliments so unlike his usual manner, she read that his heart was quite at ease, though she had carried her point, and the man she so much desired to know was sitting by her side. Nor was the pleasantness of her feelings increased by witnessing the entire devotion of Wanford to the pretty miss Travers, or the good-humoured archness with which St. Aubyn rallied her on her evident discomposure and absence of mind when he addressed her.

"This man is too much at his ease to be jealous!" thought Mrs. Felton; and she thought right; therefore, as she did not like to lose one admirer before she had gained another, she renewed her attentions to Mrs. St. Aubyn. And though that

lady

lady was inclined to resent the epithets of "ridiculous! and absurd!" which she had addressed to her, and also her not keeping the place next her for her son, she was completely pacified by a "when you come to stay with me in town, Mrs. St. Aubyn."

After a hasty meal, as the thunder storm soon passed away, leaving the scenery of Ulswater still more beautiful than it found it, they went on the lake, and as usual Mrs. Felton and her friend were requested to sing; while St. Aubyn, who, though no coxcomb, could not help looking on miss Wanford with complacency, as she thought him "the handsomest young man she ever saw," hoped that she also would favour the company with a song, as her brother had hinted that it was in her power to do so. But that lady having declared that her brother had not spoken truth, Mrs. Felton and miss Spenlove

sang a duet; after which miss Wanford hoped Mrs. Felton would sing the song of "Forget thee! No," of which she had heard so much; and Mrs. Felton, as usual, complied with graceful and unaffected alacrity.

"You know who wrote that song," said miss Spenlove significantly to Wanford, while Mrs. Felton sighed and hung down her head.

"O yes," replied Wanford carelessly, "poor Trevor! Aye—he was desperately in love when he wrote it! at least he thought so—and that is pretty much the same thing."

"Thought so! Why, I understood," cried Mrs. St. Aubyn, "that the poor gentleman was near hanging or shooting himself. Did not you say so, Mrs. Selby?"

"Me! O dear, no," replied Mrs. Selby, smiling at the inaccuracy of Mrs. St. Aubyn's memory.

"Then,

"Then, sir, you know the author of this song," addressing Wanford, (for she did not believe it was addressed to Mrs. Felton,) "and did the gentleman recover his disappointment? and is he living, sir?"

"He was living, madam, in 1798, at Florence, when I parted with him."

"Poor man! Retired into a convent, I presume, disgusted with the world," asked Mrs. Selby in an ironical tone.

"What an absurd idea!" cried Mrs. Felton. "Mr. Trevor was too wise a man, however disappointed, to seek a remedy in seclusion."

"True, madam," answered Wanford, archly smiling, "though your cruelty drove my friend to despair, I see you appreciated his wisdom justly. You are right—my friend sought a better remedy than seclusion, or the cloister's vows, for his misery."

"How, how is his health, sir?" asked Mrs. Felton.

"Never better; and in the smiles of one beautiful woman he sought consolation for the *frowns* of another."

"What, sir?" cried miss Spenlove, "is Mr. Trevor married?" for Mrs. Felton was too confused to speak.

"He is, madam, to a most lovely and admirable woman indeed; and I am sure Mrs. Felton's generosity and tenderness of heart are such as to make her rejoice to hear that my friend's eternity of woe exists no longer any where than in his song."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," said the lady; while Mr. Selby, laughing heartily, exclaimed, "So much for the constancy and sincerity of a poet!"

"*A propos*," said Wanford, "I should like to read those doleful verses. I will not ask *you* to *repeat* them Mrs. Felton; but

but perhaps you can favour me with a sight of them."

"I cannot; but Mr. St. Aubyn can, for I wrote them out for him."

"Indeed, I am very sorry, and ashamed to own," replied St. Aubyn blushing, "that I have *lost* them."

"Lost them!" said Mrs. Felton, pale with mortification: "it is a proof that my gift was not of much *value* in your opinion."

"You do me great injustice then; I valued it so much that I had it constantly about me."

"But not in a safe place, it seems."

"I thought it so; but I suspect that in stooping over the boat yesterday it fell into the water."

"Oh ho!" said Mr. Selby borrowing a phrase and a look from his wife, "then I suspect you wore it in your bosom, and it fell out from thence."

"No,

"No, indeed, I did not, sir," hastily replied St. Aubyn, blushing with a sort of indignant feeling, and conscious *that* place was sacred to the hand-writing of only one being in creation; "no, indeed, sir, I wore it in my waistcoat pocket."

"Aye, aye," said his sapient mother, "he does not like to own that he did so, but I have seen a piece of folded paper in his bosom."

"Madam," replied St. Aubyn firmly but respectfully, "I know no motive sufficient to justify a falsehood. I wore the valuable verses which I have unfortunately lost no where but in my waistcoat pocket, and the paper to which you allude is still where you discovered it, and this is it." Then, with many blushes, St. Aubyn produced a folded paper from his bosom, and holding it towards Mrs. Felton, said, "You see, madam, this cannot be the paper in question, for that

was

was embossed paper, and edged with green."

"It was, sir," said Mrs. Felton in a tone of pique.

"Yes," observed Mrs. Selby, "Mrs. Felton wrote it with her best pen, on her best paper, and in her best hand; and *yet* you lost it! O fie, Henry, to set so little value on a lady's favours!"

"But *all* ladies' favours he is not so negligent of, it seems," said Wanford.

"On that subject, sir," replied St. Aubyn proudly, "I do not admit of any comments."

"I dare say," cried Mrs. Selby, in hopes of laughing off what might grow serious, "that treasured paper contains the white satin bandeau that I lost off my hair the other day. Well, at my time of life who could have thought it!"

"But, my dear," said Mr. Selby, "as at your time of life you are too wise to

wear

wear satin bandeaus, this is no stray charm of yours that has met with so sure a pound."

"No, but I remember now, that Mrs. Felton lost *her* bandeau," archly observed Mrs. St. Aubyn.

"Oh ho!" cried Mrs. Selby.

"Yes, yes," nodded Mr. Selby; while St. Aubyn blushed so deeply, that every one *but* Mrs. Selby and Mrs. Felton herself, was convinced the guess was a just one. However, the former being anxious to drop a subject displeasing to St. Aubyn, and the latter being willing to let it be supposed her bandeau was so highly honoured, were silent, while nods and winks went round; and here the conversation dropped.

The day on the whole was one of mortification, and therefore of pain, to Mrs. Felton. In the first place, she had lowered herself in St. Aubyn's esteem, by wishing to force herself on Wanford's notice;

notice; and she had pretty plainly shown Mrs. St. Aubyn that her temper was not as mild as self-command had hitherto made it appear. In the second place, it was evident that Wanford, as yet, admired miss Travers more than he did her; and that St. Aubyn, who she fancied was all but her slave, was wholly free from love towards her, for he was free from jealousy: besides, he had lost her precious hand-writing, and wore some one's else she believed in his bosom. And lastly, Mr. Trevor had forgotten her, and was happy with another woman!

But though a little disappointed, Mrs. Felton was not disheartened. She expected that Mr. Wanford, as the friend of Mr. Trevor, who had been in reality the victim of the most consummate coquetry, would feel prejudiced against her; and she made it her study to remove this prejudice as fast as possible, even though she gave up St. Aubyn wholly

in order to effect it, and resigned his weak mother to the insignificance in their party from which her notice had raised her. But the difficulty was, how to obtain enough of Wanford's society to make him willing to acquit her towards his friend, by feeling her power to charm himself. She saw that it was a matter of indifference to him whether she noticed his sister, or not; therefore she could not make any impression on his heart by gratifying his affections. Alone, she never saw him; for, having dared to ask him to let her go with him in his very pretty and novel equipage (which was in truth the ugliest thing ever seen), Wanford had coolly replied, he was very sorry, but that he was already engaged to drive Hebe, as he called miss Travers, but hoped at some future time that he should be able to devote himself to the *maturer* charms of Minerva.

This

This was insupportable, especially as it had been overheard by St. Aubyn, who, with a smile too natural to be the result of pique, said, "You see, after all, you must take up with me; so you had better submit to your fate with a good grace, and let me hand you into my humble chaise, which, when you are in it, I consider as a triumphal car;" and Mrs. Felton with assumed gaiety complied.

I must mention here, that St. Aubyn wrote out from memory a copy of the song which he had lost, and gave it to Mrs. Felton in his *own hand-writing*.

Mrs. Felton would have been still more assured that St. Aubyn's admiration of her was wholly unmixt with love, had she known of the dialogue that had taken place the preceding evening between him and his mother. Mrs. St. Aubyn had followed her son into his chamber, requesting a few minutes conversation with him,

when

when she exclaimed, "Oh! my dear Henry! it grieves me to the soul to think how you are going on with Mrs. Felton!"

"What do you mean, my dear mother? I protest I do not understand you!

"Why, to see you so grave and so queer, and her so cold and so pettish, after you have been so loving together, and I thought and hoped all would soon be s[illegible]led between you."

"[illegible] I hear right, madam? For pity's sake, what can you mean? as I said before."

"Why, that you are going wrong together, I am sure, only owing to your not speaking *out*, as she expected you would do. Now pray come to an explanation with her; for I can't bear to see that pert jackanapes going to put your nose out of joint, as the saying is."

"I protest I cannot yet comprehend

what your meaning is, and what I am to explain."

"Nay, dear child, this is all jealous spite and pride, I see very clearly: but do conquer it, do, my darling, to make me happy, and do what she expects and wishes, that is, pop the question to her."

"Pop the question, madam! I have no question to ask Mrs. Felton. To what question do you allude?"

"Now as if you did not know, Henry, what popping the question means! Why, asking her to *marry* you, to be sure."

"Marry me! ask Mrs. Felton to marry me! And is the state of your son's heart so little known to you, that you could suppose him capable of loving and wishing to marry Mrs. Felton?"

"Well, did one ever hear the like! I could have sworn, and so could other people, I'm sure, that you were in lo e

with

with each other; and I was so rejoiced to think that I should call the honourable Mrs. Felton daughter, and go and live with her and you in a fine house, and be as happy as the day was long!"

"My dearest mother, you greatly distress me! Is it possible that my attentions to Mrs. Felton, such as she had a right to command from any man, could lead you or any one to suppose I was seeking to gain her affections? Certain am I, however, that, great as is her vanity, she knows too much of the human heart to have been herself deceived; and therefore I have nothing to reproach myself with,—else I should be miserable!"

"Miserable!" replied Mrs. St. Aubyn in a whining tone, "miserable! I am sure you have made *me* so. There! to be thus disappointed when I thought I had got a daughter-in-law that was so fond

fond of me, and had invited me to go and see her! Dear me! I shall not have half the pleasure in staying with her in London, now I find there is nothing serious between her and you."

"My dear madam, you will never be asked, depend upon it, to visit Mrs. Felton."

"No, child! Why, how can you be so provoking? Why, she repeated her invitation only yesterday; and I am sure if she does not again, it will be all *your fault*."

"Believe me, she never meant you should be her guest. I have reason to think Mrs. Felton is not the amiable woman she seems to be, and that under that apparent kindness and good nature she conceals a cold heart and a bad temper."

"Indeed! Well, and now I recollect, when you were not present today she called

called me 'ridiculous! absurd!' and looked as if she could have eaten me, just like my brother!"

"Very likely; and now you will see that the attentions she paid to you and me she will transfer to Mr. Wanford and his sister, and neglect us."

"No, child, no, I can't think she is so bad as that, neither."

"Well, we shall see. However, I thank her; for I am indebted to her for many pleasant hours, and for making me forget awhile the secret care that oppresses me; for surely, my dear mother, you cannot have forgotten that I undertook this journey not only to oblige you, but also to dissipate the uneasiness I felt at being forced to relinquish the beloved society at the White Cottage, and even that of Mr. Egerton, in compliance with my uncle's will!"

"Dear me! Why, what a fool I have been!

been! Well, to be sure, I see it all now! and so you have not forgotten miss . . ."

"Hush! hush! dear mother!——and let me try to rest. So good night, good night! and do not be so cruel as to wish your son to be the husband of Mrs. Felton."

Mrs. St. Aubyn reluctantly departed, and St. Aubyn retired to bed, but not to sleep; for so nice was his sense of honour, that he was apprehensive lest his attentions to Mrs. Felton should have gone beyond what admiration alone warranted, and he began to consider how he ought to behave to her in future.

"As I have hitherto done, to be sure," said St. Aubyn mentally, after long deliberation. "If I change my manner now, it would prove that I am self-condemned, and that I think my behaviour hitherto has been improper, while of aught dishonourable my heart acquits me: but for my mother, who *knows* Emma Castlemain, to think that

that a Mrs. Felton could drive her from my thoughts! Emma, dear Emma!" and thinking on her he fell asleep.

The next day he accosted Mrs. Felton with the same attentive manner as usual; and as he saw her earnest desire to captivate Wanford, and now knew her to be a most determined coquette, he anticipated some diversion from observing her plan of operations, in the same manner as a person who has already witnessed a display and an explanation of optical delusions, is amused at observing their power to deceive those who are as yet unacquainted with their nature.

During the walks on the banks and rocks surrounding the lakes, Mrs. Felton, just before they returned to Penrith, contrived to begin a long enumeration to Wanford, whose arm she had as it were seized, of the very fine things a friend of hers had said of him; but just as the carriages were announced she had come to the

the most interesting part of the eulogy, which was she declared too flattering for her to indulge his vanity with. The bait took; Wanford vowed she should not leave him till she had told him all, as she had excited his curiosity to an intolerable degree.

"No, no,—the carriage is here,—adieu! au revoir," cried Mrs. Felton.

"No adieu for me! You stir not from my side, or sight, till you have told me all," replied Wanford. "Therefore, Mr. St. Aubyn, will you do me the favour to take my place and drive miss Travers, while I drive this lady?" And St. Aubyn, knowing that in making the exchange he should greatly oblige Mrs. Felton, smilingly agreed to the proposal.

During their ride to Penrith Mrs. Felton, by feeding all the varied sources of vanity which were abundant in Mr. Wanford, won on him so far that he did not once regret the pretty Hebe whom he

had forsaken; and he made himself so agreeable to the fair widow, that it was not till St. Aubyn, with a cheek glowing with exercise, and eyes sparkling with a number of arch meanings, met her at the supper table, that she secretly wished, with a sigh more tender than usual, that he, and not Wanford, had been heir to lord Erdington. During supper, however, she had no eyes or ears but for Wanford; she took no notice of her dear Mrs. St. Aubyn; and to the great amusement of St. Aubyn, having prevailed on Wanford to repeat some of his poems and little pieces, she had tears for his elegies, smiles for his epigrams, and a loud laugh for his comical songs:—in short, she acted over again the same scene with which she had endeavoured to charm him the second evening that they met.

During this time, Mrs. Selby's oh ho s, miss Spenlove's meaning sneer, miss Wanford's

ford's arch smile, and Mr. Selby's sly winks at his wife, were not unobserved by St. Aubyn, and added to his diversion: but he had no pleasure in observing the comic pathetic of his mortified mother's expression, nor her evident resentment at seeing her son thrown into the back-ground entirely, and even his poetry forgotten,—that poetry which Mrs. Felton had declared was so fine that it would be a long time before she relished any other! At last maternal vanity got the better of all restraint, and she said to Mr. Wanford,

"My son can write poetry too, sir, and a very pretty poet he is, as that lady can testify. Come hither, Henry, and repeat to the gentleman some of your *beautiful* verses as Mrs. Felton called them."

"Forgive me, dear madam, if I do not obey you," replied St. Aubyn blushing, and leaving the room.

"Dear

"Dear me! see what it is to be modest," added Mrs. St. Aubyn: "my son could no more repeat his own verses than he could fly;—though, as I said before, he is so pretty a poet."

This remark excited a general smile at the implied contrast it contained between Wanford and St. Aubyn in respect to modesty; and he, in order to hide his confusion, said,

"A *pretty* poet, madam! your son a pretty poet! That is impossible!"

"Well, did one ever hear the like! to tell me my son *can't* be a pretty poet!"

"I repeat my words, madam, and I appeal to the whole company for the *truth* of what I say. 'Pretty' does not describe St. Aubyn! No—the appellation is unworthy of him. If he be a poet at all, he must be a *handsome* one:—his height, his size, the size of his features,

pretty

pretty indeed! Ask the ladies if they ever thought of calling him the *pretty St. Aubyn.* No, no—that appellation belongs exclusively to his mother," bowing low to her as he spoke.

"Well, good folks, you may laugh, and all this may be true," replied Mrs. St. Aubyn a little pacified by the compliment to her beauty; but Mrs. Felton knows my son writes finely, Does he not, madam? I ask you the question point blank; for I suspect that you do not like to answer me, lest you make your new friend envious and jealous."

"Madam!" replied Mrs. Felton contemptuously, "your suspicions proclaim the depth and nature of your understanding. Mr. St. Aubyn *is* a fine writer, a very fine writer; and so is Mr. Wanford, with this *additional* claim to admiration, a claim which must set him above the fear of competition with your son, that his

his talents have been stamped with the seal of public approbation, and that the university where he was educated is proud of calling him her own!"

"Not prouder, I'm sure, than I am of calling *Henry* my own, madam, for that matter," said Mrs. St. Aubyn; and Mr. Selby declaring it was past midnight broke up the party.

The next day when they all assembled at breakfast, Mrs. St. Aubyn made known the intention of herself and son to take their leave and return to their respective abodes; a resolution which, if she could, Mrs. Felton would have been glad to attribute to the pain St. Aubyn felt at seeing her growing partiality to Wanford: however, she flattered herself that the *rest* of the party would attribute this intended defection to a cause so flattering to her vanity. But Mrs. St. Aubyn, who

now

now disliked her as much as she had formerly liked, was resolved neither she nor any one else should labour under an error which she thought so injurious to Henry, and into which he had hinted to her it was just possible they would fall. She therefore told the company, who expressed universally great regret at the idea of parting with them, that it was quite useless to pretend to alter their determination, for that the reason that could alone have induced her son to leave home so long existed no longer; as the unhappiness which he travelled to dissipate was removed by the removal of the cause.

"Unhappiness!" exclaimed Mrs. Selby.

"Yes; my brother had quarrelled with Mrs. Castlemain: therefore Henry was forbidden her house, and could no longer be with miss Emma and Mr. Egerton,

ton, whom he loves better than the whole world, myself excepted." (Here Mrs. Felton changed colour in spite of her self-command.) "Today, however, my son has received a letter from my brother, telling him they are all reconciled, and Henry is so impatient to see his dear friends again, that to make him easy I promised to set off directly: besides, as my brother is returned, I think it right to go home, lest he should be angry at my staying away so long."

This story was not only true, but had such an air of truth also, that Mrs. Felton was forced to believe in it implicitly, and felt that the rest of the company would believe it also,—therefore all idea of St. Aubyn's ever having had a serious thought of her must vanish from every mind; and had any doubts remained, the countenance of St. Aubyn, who now entered,

tered, would have been sufficient to banish them. His heightened colour, and the joy that sparkled in his eyes, spoke such internal happiness, that his former gaiety appeared languid to his present animation; and there was not a woman in the room that did not feel inclined to envy 'miss Emma,' if not Mr. Egerton.

"Hush! mum!" said Mrs. St. Aubyn, "pray don't tell my son *why* he is so happy and so impatient to be gone."

"So, you are going to leave us, Henry?" cried Mrs. Selby affectionately.

"Aye, cruel boy!" said Mr. Selby, "and you seem as if you were glad to leave us too."

St. Aubyn blushed, and suspecting that his mother had been communicative, told him that he was sorry, very sorry, to leave so many kind friends and companions,

panions, but glad, very glad to return to others from whom he had long been separated.

"That's enough; we cannot expect more. And pray, Henry," asked Mrs. Selby, interrupting her husband, "how old is miss Castlemain now?"

"I believe she is, that is to say, I think, yes, she is between sixteen and seventeen now."

"So old! I had no idea of it."

"And she is so tall and formed for her age," observed Mrs. St. Aubyn, "that she might pass for eighteen or twenty; then she is the most beautiful creature that ever was seen:—no art; all pure nature there: and then so learned and so sensible, and yet she never gives herself airs, and sneers at other people who may not know so much as herself!"

"Quite a prodigy!" said Mrs. Felton

with

with a laugh in which there was no mirth.

"My dear friend," said Mrs. Selby, "miss Castlemain's merits have made you quite eloquent; but what says *Henry?*—does he confirm your account?"

"Oh, yes! my mother has scarcely done her justice: the greatest charm of her character is ingenuousness, and, and. . . ."

"Do not distress yourself," said Mrs. Selby kindly, "you are not on your oath, and you have said enough and looked enough to convince every body that miss Castlemain is the most charming of girls, and you the most *impartial* of judges. I *hate* her for being one of the magnets to draw you hence; and so I dare say do some others in the company, if they were as ingenuous as miss Castlemain and I."

"But is she very intelligent, Henry?" asked Mr. Selby. "I met her a year ago in a large party at your uncle's; and though I thought

thought her face and form perfection itself, I did not hear her say any thing extraordinary."

"No, my dear sir; no, I trust not.—Emma—miss Castlemain I mean, has all the modesty becoming her sex and age. She is, as Mr. Egerton once said of her, like the six-hour primrose, that closes its flowers in a bright and dazzling day, and only displays its beauties in shade. At home she talks; uttering with the simplicity of a child observations that would do honour to a woman."

Here Henry paused and deeply blushed, shocked and astonished to find that he had had nerves enough to say so much; then saying he must go and see after his chaise, which was gone to have one of the wheels mended, he left the room.

Before the company could make any remark on what he had said of miss Castlemain, miss Spenlove, who had been

absent

absent a few minutes, returned, and told Mrs. Felton that a gentleman with whom she had entered into conversation knew her, and spoke in raptures of her beauty, and would like to renew his acquaintance with her.

"Oh! pray show the gentleman in," cried Mr. Selby; and miss Spenlove, who was eager to have him introduced, desired him to enter, before Mrs. Felton could ask a single question.—I have before said that Mrs. Felton, who was a native of a sea-port town, had not been born to the rank of life in which she then was, though education had fitted her to shine in it. Still her family was respectable, and some of her connexions opulent, though not calculated for companions to the *honourable* Mrs. Felton; and one of these very relations, introduced by miss Spenlove, now entered the room. He was a thick-set, short-neck-

ed,

ed, vulgar-looking man, very rich, very purse-proud, and the wit of his own family,—a family that he thought the wisest and most virtuous in the world,—and had consequently a thorough contempt for every one not belonging to it: therefore, though he admitted Mrs. Felton, because she had once been a Stokes, might be both clever and handsome; yet, when he heard of her marrying a lord's son, he observed, "A fool! she had better have married me, or cousin Simon, than a pert sprig of quality." And as Mrs. Felton was conscious that quality and the Stokes family would not agree well together, she had not seen any of her cousin Stokeses since her marriage. Judge then of her consternation, when, while in such company, she saw the door open, and cousin Peter Stokes enter the apartment!

"How do you do, cousin, how do you do?" cried Peter Stokes, advancing to the

the petrified Mrs. Felton; "I dare say you did not expect to see me:" attempting at the same time to salute her: but she drew back with a sort of horror; and offering him her hand, coldly said, "Bless me, is it you! How are you, sir?"

"Ha! what, I suppose it be'nt the fashion to kiss! But I think the children of two own brothers, as you and I are, should not meet like strangers." Then looking round, he said, "Your servant, gentlemen; how do you, ladies?" and leading Mrs. Felton to a chair, took a seat beside her. "Well, cousin Lucy," he cried, "you look monstrous glum. Ha! there is a pretty girl!" in a half whisper, looking at miss Travers. "Aye, Lucy, I remember you just such another; but beauty's a blossom—the fairest rose at last is withered. However, I must say, you wear well—though all's not gold that glitters," grinning maliciously; "and

as you are now set up for a fine lady, I suppose," rubbing his cheek, "you may have more there than what's your own."

Never was woman more distressed than Mrs. Felton: to affront so near a relation was impossible, especially a man who was coarse and brutal enough to say the most offensive things if offended: yet she scarcely knew how to forbear resenting his vulgar rudeness.

"Well, cousin, though you are grown so sad and so silent, I'm glad to see you. Ah! poor thing! when you were only Lucy Stokes you used to be as merry as a grig; but honours change manners!"

"True," said Wanford turning to Mrs. Selby, to whom this scene was highly gratifying;

——new-made honour doth forget men's names;
And if his name be Dick, I'll call him Peter."

"What's

"What's that you are saying, sir, about Peter?" cried Stokes to the astonished Wanford: "Peter's a good name; I have a great respect for it; *my* name's Peter, sir."

"Sir, I have a great respect for the name too; and I shall have the more since I hear it is the Christian denomination of..... Whom, sir—pray, whom have I the honour of addressing?"

"Why, as to the *honour*, sir, that's neither here nor there; though Peter Stokes, sir, is a name on '*Change* as well known and as honourable perhaps as any in the land. My pockets, sir, have no gold outside, but plenty *within!*"

"Not more, I dare say, than this gentleman has," said Mrs. Felton.

"No! who is he?" (whispering.)

"Mr. Wanford, lord Erdington's heir."

"Heir! a fig for heirship! 'A bird in the

the hand is worth two in the bush.' But hark ye! as you are so fond of lords and their heirs, I'll inquire, if you please, into the truth of such reports of riches, and let you know the result, that you may not be swindled." This was said in a whisper, but so loud a one that Wanford and the rest of the party were forced to turn to the window to hide their laughter.

"Well, good folks, you are very merry there," said cousin Peter: "as to your names, I have only heard the name of one of you; and my own I was forced to tell myself, thanks to my cousin here, who did not choose to introduce us,—but may-be that's the fashion; or perhaps she thinks Peter Stokes is not smart enough nor grand enough for her to own him, now she has got *honourable* before her name."

" Indeed, sir, you wrong me."

" Sir, indeed! No sirring me, if you please."

" Well then, cousin, allow me to present you to . . . . ."

" *Present* me! There's an affected word! Why can't you say *introduce?*"

" Well then, let me *introduce* you to Mrs. Selby—Mr. Selby—Mrs. St. Aubyn—miss Wanford—miss Spenlove—miss *Travers.*"

" Aye, that's something like; I wish I was your cousin, young lady, and I would not be put off with a shake of the hand as I was with cousin Lucy here. All's pure and wholesome on that round cheek, you pretty smiler; but come, tip us your dandy, will you not?" And poor miss Travers, half alarmed, complied.

" I admire your taste, sir," observed

Wanford;

Wanford; "but allow me to ask, is there a *Mrs.* Peter Stokes?"

"No, sir; but perhaps there may be one day or other; there's no hurry."

"No, sir, no, you are quite a young man yet."

"Why, yes; but not so young as I was, nor my cousin here neither, and she and I are much of a muchness with respect to age."

"You and Mrs. Felton, sir! Impossible!" cried Wanford.

"What, sir, do you doubt my word? I tell you, when I *die*, cousin Lucy may begin to quake in her shoes."

"Really, Mr. Stokes, really," faltered out Mrs. Felton, "you must be....."

"Aye, coz! what am I? Two-and-thirty next birth-day, and so are you."

"Sir," replied Mrs. Felton almost ready to cry with vexation, "you must

not be contradicted, I know; therefore I shall not dispute the point with you."

"Dear me!" whispered Mrs. St. Aubyn to Mrs. Selby, congratulating herself that the register of her parish was out of his reach, "did you ever hear such a rude, vulgar brute?"

"No whispering there, that an't manners, I'm sure, Mrs..... What did you say this lady's name was?"

"St. Aubyn—Mrs. St. Aubyn."

"Mrs. St. Aubyn! What, the widow of St. Aubyn once member for Cockermouth?"

"The very same, sir, the very same," eagerly replied that lady.

"Well," said the incorrigible Peter Stokes after looking long and earnestly in her face, "to see how things come about! Why, I dare say then you are Henny Hargrave that was?"

"To

"To be sure I am; but what then, sir?"

"What then? Why, only that five-and-thirty years ago my uncle Dick Stokes was so in love with you!"

"Dear me! I am sure, sir, I never knew such a person as Dick Stokes in my life, and you must mean some one else."

"No such thing, I tell you; I know what I say: and his father, my grandfather, would not let him marry you because you had not the cash."

"It is all a mistake, sir, I tell you," cried Mrs. St. Aubyn provoked at being made so old.

"No, no, madam, it is not; and where's the wonder that some thirty years ago you were young and beautiful? I say, sweetheart," to miss Travers, "don't be vain of your youth and your beauty; for, as the man says in the play,

'To this complexion you must come at last.'"

"And a very good complexion it is to come to, sir," said Wanford: "'tis beauty truly blent,' as I see you are fond of quotations, 'whose red and white—' But to speak more to the purpose, sir; give me leave to hint, that if a Mrs. Peter Stokes be not already fixed upon, this young lady whom you admire, Hebe I call her, would perhaps be . . . . ."

"Mr. Wanford," said Mrs. Selby angrily, "you distress miss Travers, and I must desire you to desist." While Mrs. Felton, at length recovering her vexation a little, asked him how his family did.

"My family!" he replied; "why not say *our* family, as your and my family are the same? And if your husband had not been honourable by nature as well as by name, and done so handsomely by you as to leave you a good 2000*l*. per annum, you

you would have been glad enough to have come to *my* family for support."

"*Never*, sir, never," cried Mrs. Felton, fire flashing from her eyes, "never; I would have begged my bread sooner."

"Well said, spirit, but I don't believe you: however, I am glad to find you so well to do in the world, with your fine landaulet which I saw in the yard: however, as I know nothing about coats-of-arms, I should not have known to whom it belonged but for that chatty lady yonder, miss or Mrs. Spenlove; but she began talking to me, and she told me that it belonged to Mrs. Felton, (the honourable Mrs. Felton,) with whom, she contrived to tell me, she was living, and on the present tour. Oh, thinks I to myself, if so be she is so proud of being the *friend* of this bit of quality, what will she think I ought to be when she hears I am her relation?"

"So then it is to miss *Spenlove*, is it," said Mrs. Felton with a most malicious expression, "that I am indebted for this happiness!"

"Yes; she knew how fond you were of your own flesh and blood, and so she said she would *present* me."

"Miss Spenlove, you may depend on it I shall not *forget* the obligation."

Just then St. Aubyn entered, and Mrs. Felton introduced him.

"What! is this your son, madam?" cried Stokes, rising and bowing low to St. Aubyn.

"Yes, sir, it is."

"Then, madam, you have deserved well of your country. Why, he looks like a prince! The finest young fellow I ever set my eyes on!" in a half whisper to his cousin: "one would have thought she had him by my uncle: out of my own family I never saw such a man!"

St. Aubyn now said his chaise was at

the

the door; and having gracefully taken an appropriate leave of each of the company, and received from Mrs. Felton her card of address in town, he handed his mother down stairs; to whom, when she bade her adieu, her faithless friend had said, "Should you ever happen to come to town, Mrs. St. Aubyn, I hope you will not forget to give me *a call*."

"So much for your visit to London, my dear mother," said St. Aubyn as they drove off. "But come, be cheerful, we are hastening to real friends, to fond affectionate faithful friends; to beings who mean all that they say, and by whom it is an honour to be respected and beloved."

"My dear child," cried Mrs. St. Aubyn dolefully, "to be sure you forget we are going home to my brother."

As soon as they were gone, the carriages were ordered round; and Mrs. Selby, not out of kindness to Mr. Stokes, but

malice to Mrs. Felton, asked the former if he would not do them the honour of joining their party, and accompanying them to and on Ulswater lake.

"I was thinking, madam," said he, "that considering it is so many years since we met, my cousin here might have had the kindness to invite me."

"Impossible! I could not take the liberty," replied Mrs. Felton. "I consider myself as Mr. and Mrs. Selby's guest, and cannot ask any one to join our party."

"Except," retorted Mrs. Selby laughing, "that one be a gentleman of certain agreeable qualities and rank in life;" for it was Mrs. Felton who invited Wanford.

"Well, madam, whether so be my qualities and rank in life," cried Stokes, "be agreeable or not, is neither here nor there—I am her own flesh and blood—but not that I should have accepted her

offers

offers had they been ever so pressing. None of your going on your lakes for me."

"Excuse me, sir," said Wanford, "I thought you came on purpose to see the lakes."

"Well, and so I did; but going on the lakes and *seeing* them, are two very different things, I take it."

"Certainly, sir," replied Wanford; "then I conclude you are afraid on the water."

"I afraid on the water! That's a good one—I that have crossed the Atlantic half a score times! I that have been for logwood to the bay of Honduras, I afraid of the water! No, indeed—but after being tossed about on waves as high as a house, this going along on smooth water is poor insipid work."

"True, sir, who after having ridden an elephant would cross a donkey!"

"Besides,

"Besides, angling in fresh water is poor milk and water fun."

"Certainly, sir, to one," replied Wanford, "whose pleasures like yours are all of the sublime kind; you I conclude never bob but for whales. May I ask how many you have ever caught?"

Stokes, having shrewdness enough to perceive that Wanford was laughing at him, replied, half in joke and half in earnest, "Caught whales! No, sir, no,—I never caught any thing of the sort; but I'll tell you, sir, what you 'll soon find you have caught to your cost."

"Bless me, sir, what have I caught?"

"Why, in me you have caught a *Tartar*," he replied in a voice of thunder, which turned the laugh against Wanford, and made Stokes very vain of his own wit.

The carriages were now announced, Stokes persisting in not accompany-

ing

ing them, even though, he said, nodding and winking at miss Travers, they had with them a nice decoy duck.

Mrs. Felton coldly gave him her card of address in London, and said she should be glad to see him; that she breakfasted at ten or eleven commonly, and dined at seven.

"Thank ye, thank ye," said he; "and when you come into our parts, cousin, I hope you will come and smoke a pipe and drink a bottle of wine with me."

"A very extraordinary proposal to a lady, sir!" said Wanford.

"Not more so than her inviting me to a breakfast at ten, and a dinner at seven; for I am just as fit for the one as she for the other."

"No, no, my honourable cousin, your habits and mine don't suit,—so we shall not come together often,—and luckily the world is wide enough for us both. But

come

come, let us see you off." So saying, he handed Mrs. Felton down stairs; when finding she was to go with Wanford in his carriage, "What, is she going with you?" said he to Wanford. "I thought you would have preferred that pretty young thing. But every one to his taste, as the old gentlewoman said when she kiss'd her cow."

"Stay, sir, one moment's conference," cried Wanford. "Have you any ground for what you have just said? Is there any historical evidence for supposing that the sensible person whose saying you have just quoted was an old gentlewoman, and not an old woman only, as she is usually called?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"I mean the cow caresser, sir, whom you honoured by speaking after: perhaps amongst your own family archives you may possess her pedigree?"

"Why,

"Why, no, sir," returned Stokes with a malicious laugh; "I have not much to do with pedigrees; but if the *cow* in this case had a pedigree, I should not be surprised to find your name in it as one of her descendants by the name of a *calf*." Then he laughed so loud at what he fancied wit, that Wanford, glad to escape from a contest in which he was not likely to come off unhurt, set his horses into a quick trot, putting his whip hand to his ear as he did so, and exclaiming, "A most extraordinary and overpowering person, 'pon honour!" while Stokes, after shaking the rest of the company heartily by the hand, and looking as if he wished to give miss Travers a warmer farewell, allowed the other carriages to drive off, and then mounted his horse. But he overtook Wanford's vehicle on the road; and riding up to Mrs. Felton, to the great mortification of her pride, he desired her to see how inde-

independent he was,—for that he carried his linen and portmanteau before him.

"How shockingly vulgar, sir!" exclaimed she: "why, you look like a rider!"

"Aye, aye, and like a very good thing too; for, if your ancestors and mine, cousin, had not been riders, you and I should not have been as genteel as we are now, and you could not have afforded to keep those powder monkeys, who are, I see, grinning behind to hear a man with saddle-bags call their mistress cousin. But my service to you, I and my bags will shock you no longer." So off he galloped, much to the joy of Mrs. Felton, but the loss of her companion—to whom his oddity was a source of amusement.

The next morning, as the lake had been sufficiently explored, the party resolved to return to Mr. Selby's house, where after staying two days, Mr. and miss Wanford continued their journey to

Scotland; whither, had she been invited, Mrs. Felton would have accompanied them. But Wanford, now he had lost his rival St. Aubyn, from whom he was proud to have gained the fair widow, was tired of a conquest which he had made with so little trouble; and as he clearly perceived Mrs. Felton would accept his hand if he offered it, his vanity was sufficiently gratified, and he thought his honour required that he should leave the lady before she had lost her affections beyond the power of recall. Accordingly he and his sister pursued their original plan, and set off; while the mortified and disappointed Mrs. Felton returned to London soon after out of humour with herself, miss Spenlove, and all the world.

But while St. Aubyn and his mother are on their road home, I will relate how this happy reconciliation with Mr. Har-

grave took place. "I am come," said Mr. Egerton, one morning abruptly entering the room where Emma and Mrs. Castlemain were sitting, "I am come to tell you that Mr. Hargrave is dangerously ill with the gout in his stomach."

"O dear! if he should die!" exclaimed Emma, with nothing like alarm in her countenance—Here she stopped, checked by a look of displeasure from Mrs. Castlemain, and one of sad surprise from Mr. Egerton.

"I doubt, Emma, you do not always think before you speak," said Mrs. Castlemain.

"At least," replied Emma with blushing ingenuousness, "I do not always speak well, and I must own that there is not to me any thing very terrible in the idea of Mr. Hargrave's death."

"Do you think him then so well prepared to die?" said Mr. Egerton gravely.

"But

"But he shall not die if I can help it," exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain: "I have a prescription for the gout in the stomach, which I have known perform wonderful cures; and if you, Mr. Egerton, could but contrive means of getting it administered to Mr. Hargrave, without his knowing from whom it came——"

"I will attempt no such subterfuge, madam," replied Mr. Egerton; "but I will go to Mr. Hargrave myself immediately, and if he will consent to be saved by your means, well and good; but it is always the best as well as most virtuous mode of proceeding to tell the truth, regardless of consequences."

"I dare say you are right," said Mrs. Castlemain, rising to go in search of the prescription; while Emma starting across the room kissed her affectionately, exclaiming, "Kind good grandmother! how

I respect

I respect you! and after all his ill-usage too! But you forgave *me*, and that was more difficult still;" not being aware that the difficulty lies in preserving enmity towards those we fondly love.

Mr. Egerton found Mr. Hargrave so seriously alarmed for his life, that he was willing to try any medicine, and from any hand; and though he said with an oath, that Mrs. Castlemain was a very conceited obstinate old woman, he was quite willing to take her medicine, adding, that to be nurses and Lady Bountifuls was all old women were good for; and Mr. Egerton left him fully resolved to profit by the cure which Mrs. Castlemain had sent.

In two days time, whether the medicine was infallible, or the disorder transient, certain it is that Mr. Hargrave was cured; and on the morning of the third day he presented himself in person

at

at the door of Mrs. Castlemain, who graciously received him, and his hearty thanks for her kind and salutary attention, which were accompanied by a salute, at once a pledge of reconciliation and gratitude,—while he swore that no infernal chess board should ever in future make any words between them.

"But where is Henry? is not he returned yet?" asked Mr. Egerton.

"No, he is still on his frolics."

"And on his *preferment* too, we hear," observed Mrs. Castlemain, while Emma turned to the window to hide her involuntary emotion.

"Pho! nonsense! all stuff!" cried Mr. Hargrave, "Henry is not such a goose as to marry any honourable madam, any fine lady whatever. Besides, I flatter myself that I must have a spoke in that wheel, and I promise you I have no taste

for

for any thing like quality binding; and I value my banker's book more than all the red books that were ever printed."

Emma listened with anxious attention to this speech, and thought she had never seen Mr. Hargrave so amiable: still he only spoke what he believed, not what he knew; and though consciously easier than before, she was delighted to think St. Aubyn was probably on his road home, and she eagerly anticipated his return to the Vale House.

But a new event now took place, of more importance even than Mr. Hargrave's reconciliation with Mrs. Castlemain. Mr. Egerton, who, as I have before stated, was the younger son of one of the branches of a noble family, became, by the death of a distant relation, heir to a very large fortune, not less than 60,000*l.* in money, besides estates, which were

capable

capable of being raised to some thousands per annum. The news of this great accession of property was received by him at first with a feeling of anguish rather than of joy. It re-awakened the agony he had felt before when good tidings reached him as he mourned by the dead body of her who could alone, he thought, give value to riches, by sharing them with him; and as he read the letter informing him of his acquisitions, he clasped his hands convulsively together, and exclaiming "It comes too late," as he had formerly done, he threw the letter to his alarmed friends, and rushed into another apartment.

"No," said Emma to Mrs. Castlemain, "it does *not* come too late, and so his benevolent heart will own when he recovers his first feelings: he will then recollect the good which this money will enable

enable him to do, and he will rejoice in it, I am sure he will." Emma was right, and in an hour's time Mr. Egerton returned to them composed and even cheerful. But neither Emma nor Mrs. Castlemain could speak to him, they each took and held his hand in silence, while the full and glad heart betrayed itself by the swelling and quivering lip.

"So, ladies, I am a rich old fellow at last," said he, brushing a tear from his eye.

"And I bless God that you are so," said Emma, "for your wealth will be the source of blessing to many."

Then, not for a moment considering that she herself would in all probability be the better for Mr. Egerton's fortune, she looked forward with delight to the idea of his adopting Henry St. Aubyn, and setting him free from dependence on his tyrannical uncle.

"My dear sir," said Mrs. Castlemain, your present residence will not be good enough for you now!"

"I am sure I shall have no other," replied Mr. Egerton, "I shall make no difference in my mode of life—*none.* I have long had a melancholy pleasure, and shall to the end of my existence, in rejecting *all* but the bare necessaries of life, as she who would have joyfully shared my poverty cannot share——Pshaw!" cried he abruptly, and hastily left the room; while Emma, whose young heart was rendered unusually susceptible by the anxieties of a dawning passion, wept over these affecting reminiscences of a virtuous, faithful, and unhappy love, and almost envied the lost, but still fondly regretted, Clara Ainslie.

"Mr. St. Aubyn is like miss Ainslie in Mr. Egerton's opinion," observed Emma.

"*Mr. who*, my dear?" said Mrs. Castlemain.

"M—Mr. St. Aubyn."

"Bless me, child! why do you *Mr.* him? I never knew you do so before."

"Well," replied Emma, deeply blushing, "then Henry St. Aubyn is like miss Ainslie; therefore it is no wonder that Mr. Egerton loves him so dearly:—nor," thought Emma sighing, "if she was really like Henry, is it to be wondered at that he was so fond of *her*."

It was some hours before Mr. Egerton could conquer his own heart, and meet his good fortune with the thankfulness of a Christian and the fortitude of a man; but at length he was quite himself again, and re-entered the drawing-room.

"Well, Emma," he exclaimed, "to whom shall my *first* present be given? whom does your heart suggest as the first object for my riches to be exerted on? Come, speak; I do not mean you should openly and boldly point out who are to be my heirs."

"No,

" No, sir," replied Emma, " for I hope your only heirs will be your own children."

" My children, Emma! I suppose you mean the heirs or children of my adoption?"

" No, sir; I mean, that I hope you will marry and have children."

" Very disinterested that in you," replied Mr. Egerton forcing a smile; " but consider my gray heirs, child."

" What are they, sir?" she returned: " only a little snow on the top of a green mountain: you are a young man yet, and formed as you are for domestic life, I—"

" Say no more on that subject if you love me," hastily returned Mr. Egerton, " the vibrations of that string thrill through me yet too painfully. No, Emma, no, talk to me only of feasible plans,—of the St. Aubyns probably by my means rescued from dependence on Mr. Hargrave!"

"Oh! my dear sir, do that, do that," eagerly exclaimed Emma, "and you will be good indeed!"

"Well, well, we shall see," replied Mr. Egerton smiling at her eagerness; "but Henry, you know, is said to be on the eve of independence already."

"I have not yet answered your question, sir," said Emma (glad to get rid of that subject), "relative to your first gifts on this accession of fortune."

"True, and to whom shall they be given?"

"To the Orwells, sir, if I may advise."

"Right; you guessed my meaning;" and Mrs. Castlemain with a deep sigh observed, that they deserved every attention.

The next day, and before etiquette *warranted*, as breakfast was scarcely over, St. Aubyn appeared at Mrs. Castlemain's gate; for though he had been home two

days, his uncle, on pretence of business, had not allowed him to leave the house. Immediately, in spite of her repeated declarations that she would fly to him as soon as she saw him and reproach him for not confiding in her, Emma ran up stairs to hide the perturbation which the sight of him occasioned her; and when she had resolution to enter the room where he was, and alone too, her manner was involuntarily cold, distant, and restrained.

"Dear Emma," said St. Aubyn, "what an age it is since I have seen you, and how glad I am to see you once more!" while Emma, walking awkwardly across the room, for the first time in her life smiled languidly, coldly gave him her hand, and seated herself at a distance from him.

"But how *well* you look!" cried St. Aubyn, following her and gazing with delight

light on her mantling cheek : " yet surely you are not well,—you seem out of spirits, and so so,—I can't tell how, but certainly not like *my* Emma:" and he kissed her hand as he spoke.

"Your Emma, Mr. St. Aubyn!" said Emma, putting up her pretty lip, and angrily withdrawing her hand.

"I desire you will not take such liberties with me; I dare say you dare not do so to Mrs.—Mrs. Felton."

"Mrs. Felton?" replied St. Aubyn laughing.

"But perhaps you are on very familiar terms with that lady?" resumed Emma.

"Aye, to be sure I am, or was, dear Emma," he replied, again approaching her: but with a look of serious displeasure she desired him to keep a respectful distance, for that she did not consider herself any longer as a child.

"Emma,

"Emma, dearest Emma, for pity's sake," exclaimed St. Aubyn, "tell me how I have offended you!"

"You have *not* offended me, but, but . . . ."

St. Aubyn now saw tears in her eyes, "But what?"

"Only I think it very unkind that you should not let me know yourself that you were to marry Mrs. Felton, but leave me to hear it from strangers."

St. Aubyn, surprised but delighted beyond measure, again seized her struggling hand, and exclaimed,

"Is this then the reason of all this coldness and displeasure?—Oh! if I dare interpret these signs as I wish," said he to himself, for he was too delicate to utter the sentiment, "I would not give one of those frowns or starting tears for all the smiles or distinction that Mrs. Felton could bestow."

"And

"And *could* you for a moment, Emma, believe that I was in love with, or going to marry, Mrs. Felton? O Emma! are you indeed so unacquainted with my heart?"

It was unnecessary for St. Aubyn to say any more. Emma felt that the report was entirely false; and with a heart suddenly lightened of a load, the weight of which she was not conscious of till it was removed, she smiled archly through her tears, gave him her hand freely, and saying, "So then I am disappointed of my wedding favour," jumped up suddenly with her usual velocity, bounded along the lawn to meet Mr. Egerton, and told him with great eagerness that Henry St. Aubyn was come, and not going to marry Mrs. Felton.

"I told you so," said Mr. Egerton, his countenance beaming with satisfaction, and observing with delight that the

coun-

countenance of his pupil also had an expression of happiness on it which he had not seen for some time,—for certainly his fondest wish was a marriage between Emma and St. Aubyn. And weeks and months lasted the happiness that was thus restored to the bosom of Emma by the presence of St. Aubyn. Every hour that he could spare from his exacting uncle he spent at the White Cottage, and every hour seemed to insure to him a dearer interest in the heart of all its inhabitants. Emma had not a sorrow, a care, or a hope, which she did not communicate to her friend as she called him, save one lurking anxiety which she did not like to own even to herself. St. Aubyn, in relating to her the events of his tour to the lakes, had owned that he thought Mrs. Felton very handsome, very clever, very accomplished, and very insinuating; and

she was not without her suspicions at times, being naturally inclined to jealousy, that had not Mr. Wanford come in the way, St. Aubyn's affections might really have been captivated by this dangerous woman, and her *friend* have been lost to her for ever. This idea used sometimes to come across her mind and fill her eyes with tears, while St. Aubyn was talking of Mrs. Felton; which he perceiving used tenderly to inquire their cause.

"Oh! it is nothing, nothing," she was in the habit of replying: then, ashamed of her weakness, she endeavoured to change the discourse, and was very soon herself again. To St. Aubyn she now confided every circumstance of her poor mother's history; while he used to gratify her by declaring, that whenever he went to London, his first wish would be to see the benevolent

Orwells, to whom *he* owed so much. In short, nothing of love was wanting between them but a declaration of it; and that, St. Aubyn, aware of the obstacles to their union, hesitated to make, lest, as honour forbade him to do so without having first obtained the consent and approbation of his uncle and Mrs. Castlemain, his suit should be at once rejected, and the present delightful intercourse be entirely forbidden. Of Mr. Egerton's intentions in his favour he knew nothing; and he knew his uncle too well, not to fear that, were it only from the suggestions of temper, he would oppose his wishes: he therefore reluctantly resolved to conceal his secret in his own breast, (if that can be said to be concealed which every look, every tone, and every sentiment betrayed,) and to wait patiently, contented with the privileges of a friend, till Emma, no longer secluded from an admiring world, should be the

object

object of other vows, and he must either speak or lose her for ever.

It may be asked why St. Aubyn with his honourable feelings, and possessed as he was of health, industry, and talent, should so tamely submit to dependence on a tyrannical and coarse-minded relation? But alas! his reasons for so doing were cogent and even unanswerable. He knew that were he to throw off the yoke of dependence, his uncle in revenge would cast off Mrs. St. Aubyn, and leave her to be wholly maintained by him; a duty which he would have delighted to take on himself, had his mother been like, I may venture to say, *most* women under similar circumstances: but St. Aubyn well knew, that by no probable and even possible exertions of his could he even *maintain* his thoughtless, wasteful, and extravagant parent. With a mother of other habits he was conscious

that

that he could have lived on the income of a fellowship or clerkship, and whatever trifle she could have added to their income by keeping a school, or the exertions of her needle; while with such a one he felt that he could have supported the difficulties of a narrow fortune with a light contented heart, and have gladly braved the danger of being disinherited by his unamiable relation. But it was clear even to a mathematical demonstration, that should he venture to disoblige his uncle, and be turned adrift by him with the helpless Mrs. St. Aubyn, a jail for his mother, if not for himself, was the only prospect that awaited him, such were her inveterate habits of needless extravagance: and thus did this otherwise affectionate parent, by this pernicious vice, hang like a millstone round the neck of her noble-minded son, palsying all the energies of his free-born soul,

soul, and reducing to the slave of a tyrant's nod a creature born with the best and proudest aspirings of a virtuous and highly-gifted being.

While St. Aubyn was thus continuing to bear the burthen of dependence from the best of motives, a little cheered indeed under the load by the consciousness that it was only as the heir of his uncle that he could pretend to the hand of Emma Castlemain, (for of Mr. Egerton's intentions in his favour Emma was at present forbidden to inform him,) Mr. Egerton was considering the best mode of putting those plans in execution, flattering himself that they would further an immediate union between Henry and Emma, as he well knew that only the half of his fortune ceded to them during his life would be sufficient for the gratification of all their wishes. "But the

race

race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" and the benevolent man, however good his intentions may be, must only be too often forced to content himself with the consciousness that he meant well, though chance, or error, may frustrate the accomplishment of his designs.

Mrs. St. Aubyn looked upon herself, it is true, as rather an extravagant woman,—but then she smoothed over the acknowledged fault thus: "To be sure I like to spend money,—but then I have been used to it, and I like to have things *genteel* about me; and I know my brother is rich enough to keep me a carriage if he would; and therefore I *must* have things a little smart, and I *will* have them too."

But, like all of us in our turn, Mrs. St. Aubyn did not look to the consequences of her own actions. She was not aware

that

that errors, like *sorrows,* "come not as single spies, but in battalions;" that the consequence of her determination to have "things genteel about her" was running in debt; that the consequence of running in debt, was lying and mean evasions in order to put off the pressing demands of creditors; and she chose to forget, that though she talked of making her *brother* provide for her elegant wants, she dared not make any one of them known to him, but that she drew from the filial piety of her noble-minded son even the money he wanted to enable him to support the appearance of a gentleman. Still Mrs. St. Aubyn called herself only a *little extravagant* or so; but she had soon to learn that an extravagant being, like an avaricious one, is never sure of remaining completely honest.

St. Aubyn and his mother both returned home with all their little stock of wealth

wealth expended on their tour, and two months must elapse before Mr. Hargrave, who never paid money before it was due, would pay them their quarterly allowance; and debts and duns awaited Mrs. St. Aubyn at home.

"I will pay you in two months time positively," said she; and soon after her return, all but one creditor went away relying on her promise: but he telling her she had so often deceived him that he would have the money that evening, or half of it, or apply instantly for it to her brother the squire; poor Mrs. St. Aubyn saw herself reduced to the necessity of either borrowing what she wanted herself, of prevailing on Henry to borrow it, or of being exposed to the terrible and fierce resentment of her awful brother. But already had she asked her son for the money, and he, eager to oblige her, had asked it as a loan to himself

self of his uncle, who had kindly told him he must wait for it till it was his due, and that he need not have been so extravagant as to spend his money in journeys and frolics. Still she thought St. Aubyn might be prevailed upon to borrow the money elsewhere; and as she was to dine at the Vale House that day to meet Mr. Egerton and the families from the White Cottage, she hoped to have an opportunity of seeing her son apart, and of disclosing her distresses to him, To Mr. Egerton she dared not apply, because, though he was come to a large fortune and was very generous, she did not like to make a disclosure which might lead him to suppose her extravagant, as she had not yet given up the idea that he secretly loved her, and might one day or other make her his wife.

As it was a wet day, Mrs. Castlemain sent her carriage for her when it had

taken

taken them to Mr. Hargrave's,—so Mrs. St. Aubyn had not the relief she expected, of unburthening her mind to her son when he came to fetch her in the chaise,—and full of agitation she took her seat at her brother's table.

Nor was the humour in which she saw Mr. Hargrave at all likely to calm her perturbation; for he was in one of his worst moods, a mood indeed in which his nephew was but too often accustomed to see him, but which he did not frequently exhibit before any one that was not a dependent.

"Where is St. Aubyn?" said Mr. Egerton, seeing that they were summoned to dinner without his having yet made his appearance.

"He is gone some miles off on business of mine," gruffly replied Mr. Hargrave, "and he can't be home for an hour yet."

"I am

"I am very sorry to hear it," cried Mr. Egerton.

"Yes, no doubt," returned the other, "I know I am nobody to Henry; and it is him and not me whom you came to see."

"Not so, Mr. Hargrave; but surely, if you invited me to come and partake of turbot and turtle-soup at your table, I should have a right to be disappointed if you gave me only the latter!"

"So, you make Henry the turbot, and me only the soup! But you are right there, for certainly I have more cayenne in me than he has."

Just then Henry himself arrived, having ridden very fast; and was received by his uncle with—

"How dare you, sir, ride my horse as hard as you must have ridden him in order to get back so soon?"

"I have not ridden him harder than humanity warranted, sir," replied St. Aubyn.

"It is a lie," answered Mr. Hargrave.

"As you know, sir, that I never told you a falsehood in my life, and am incapable of doing it, I am satisfied that you are not in earnest in what you have now said," replied St. Aubyn mildly but manfully.

"Meaning to say then that I lie, I suppose?" retorted Mr. Hargrave.

"I hope my words will not bear so coarse an interpretation, sir."

"Come, come, let us eat our dinner," interrupted Mr. Egerton; and Mr. Hargrave full of sulky irritation took his seat.

St. Aubyn then produced some letters which he had written for his uncle; but they were all condemned as ill worded and ill written; and Mr. Hargrave added,

"But you never do any thing well for *me*; you think any thing good enough for me. If Mr. Egerton had employed you, the

the case would have been very different."

But neither that gentleman nor St. Aubyn chose to notice this splenetic remark, and the subject was dropt.

It was the time for Mr. Hargrave to receive his dividends on his East-India property; and though the contemplation of his riches had usually power to put him in good humour, it had not done so today; as he was not fond of his expected guests, and he really disliked Mr. Egerton more than ever since his accession of fortune,—he, like most rich people, not being to endure a rival in wealth, and having great pleasure in undervaluing the fortunes and gains of others, while he not unfrequently boasted of his own.

"Alas!" thought Mrs. St. Aubyn, while her brother at dinner talked of the pleasure of a well-filled purse, and seemed to wish to measure his with Mr. Egerton's;

ton's; "I wish he would impart this blessing to some one whom I could name!" and her wishes were not a little increased, nor her alarm heightened, by the intelligence that some one wanted to speak with her, and seeing that it was the dreaded creditor. With some difficulty she however got away from him, and returned to Mrs. Castlemain, who was busily reading the paper in the drawing-room, whither the ladies had already retired, while Emma was walking in a grove near the house.

"O that I dare borrow this money of Mrs. Castlemain!" thought Mrs. St. Aubyn: "the half, which would satisfy him, is only *five pounds*." But before she could make up her mind to do it, Mr. Egerton and Henry came in, and the latter sat down to copy a letter of business for the former, which he wanted to have written immediately. Consequently

Mrs.

Mrs. St. Aubyn could not speak to her son as soon as she had intended. Soon after Mr. Hargrave entered the room, and taking a handfull of bank notes out of his pocket, which he was going to deposit in the drawers of a book-case which stood at the end of the apartment, he told them over one by one with all the pride of riches, naming the amount of the precious hoard.

"It is right," said he, "to tell money, they say, even after one's own father:" then preparing his keys, he was going to lock up the sum, when he was called out to speak to a tenant, and he left the notes piled up upon the table at which St. Aubyn was writing. At this moment St. Aubyn's whole attention was riveted on his letter; Mr. Egerton's back was towards the company, while he was employed in making a new pen for Henry; and Mrs. Castlemain was completely absorbed in reading the newspaper; while on the

top

top of the notes lay a five-pound note, the very sum which would extricate Mrs. St. Aubyn from her difficulties; and Mr. Hargrave had told the notes once, therefore it was very unlikely he should tell them again. The temptation was irresistible; and she flattered herself that she could own what she had done when her brother paid her allowance, and return five pounds; so it was taking what would soon be her *due*; till at last she drew near the table; and while she pretended to be admiring Henry's fine writing, she contrived by degrees to separate the five-pound note from the rest; and having done so, with a sort of desperate resolution she put it in her pocket and retreated to a glass door leading into the garden, meaning to join Emma who was walking there, and avoid the perturbation which her brother's return would unquestionably expose her to feel. But to effect this

was impossible. Mrs. Castlemain followed, and, detaining her, insisted on her reading a long and interesting account in the newspaper of a mysterious murder; and Mrs. St. Aubyn, too ill at ease to find a ready excuse for refusing, submitted to her request and read the story, wholly unconscious of a single character before her, for Mr. Hargrave's loud voice was heard in the hall, and in another minute he entered the room.

"A plaguy puppy!" said he in no very placid frame of mind; "I thought I should never have gotten rid of him. But now for my notes. Hey-day!" exclaimed he, "how is this? Why, I thought I left a five-pound note at top! Some one has been meddling with these things," darting a look of suspicion around.

"I am positive, sir, that no one has touched them," said St. Aubyn mildly, and looking up as he spoke; "for

"for I do not recollect that any one has been near the table, but myself."

"Well, I shall soon see that," said Mr. Hargrave, and began to re-tell the notes,—while Mrs. St. Aubyn wished herself in the centre of the earth.

"I was not mistaken," said Mr. Hargrave scowling suspicion and accusation from under his bushy brows; "the sum was right before, and now there are five pounds wanting: besides, the note was a remarkable one, and could not but be missed. Ha!" cried Mr. Hargrave, "and now I remember five pounds was the sum you wanted to borrow of me yesterday, Mr. St. Aubyn; and here, sir, before all these witnesses, I accuse you of having stolen my note!"

At this dreadful speech, uttered with almost maniacal vehemence of look and gesture, Mr. Egerton, Mrs. Castlemain,

 and

and even Mrs. St. Aubyn approached the scene of contention; while St. Aubyn, rising with all the dignified indignation of conscious and outraged innocence, was about to deny the charge with firmness equal to his uncle's violence, when his eye glanced on his self-convicted and guilty mother, who more dead than alive awaited the consequence of her too late repented guilt, and seemed to regard him with a look of supplication. In a moment the truth flashed on his mind; and aware that his denial of being guilty, and the proof which Mr. Hargrave would require of him, namely, submitting to be searched, would immediately fix the accusation on the *real* culprit, his courage failed him, his indignation was swallowed up in agony, and sitting down he leaned in silence on the table and hid his face in his hands.

"What,

"What, sir! you will not speak then, you will not confess your guilt! But silence gives consent, they say, and . . . . ."

Here Mr. Hargrave was again called out of the room, and muttering a curse or two, he obeyed the summons.

"What is the matter?" said Emma hastily entering.

"A mystery," replied Mrs. Castlemain: "Mr. Hargrave misses a bank note, and accuses his nephew of having taken it; and it is very certain no one was *near* the table but he."

"And what then, madam?" cried Emma, turning pale with anger. "If fifty Mr. Hargraves accused St. Aubyn of the theft, I would not believe him guilty. Nay, I would not believe it if I had even seen him take the note,—but I should have doubted the evidence of my senses."

"Mighty fine and romantic indeed!" cried Mrs. Castlemain: "and pray who

do

do you think then *did* take the note, I, Mr. Egerton, or Mrs. St. Aubyn ?"

" Me !" said Mrs. St. Aubyn almost convulsively ; " Dear me ! "

" I accuse no one," said Emma gravely, " but I only say. I *know* that St. Aubyn is innocent ; and to the base charge I would have him ' let his only answer be *his life !*' "

" Well said, my dear child," cried Mr. Egerton, " and well felt too :" while St. Aubyn, too miserable to be even capable of joy at being thus defended, could only reply to the " dear dear St. Aubyn, be composed," which she addressed to him, by wringing her hand with the convulsive violence of agony. Mrs. St. Aubyn meanwhile, unable to stand, tottered to a chair, for again the alarming voice of her brother was approaching.

" I see, madam," said Mr. Egerton, " that the scene which must follow will

be

be too much for your nerves; therefore allow me to lead you into another apartment:" and Mrs. St. Aubyn leaning on his arm staggered out of the room. In a few moments Mr. Egerton returned, just as Mr. Hargrave was again accusing his nephew and demanding a confession of his guilt. Oh, then, what were not the struggles in St. Aubyn's mind! Scenes long past rapidly flitted across his recollection. He remembered his father's death-bed; the promise he made to make his mother's good his first rule of action, to skreen her from every ill, to shelter her from every sorrow; and now one word from his lips would plunge her in irremediable disgrace.

"No," said St. Aubyn to himself, "I can better bear my own; and *Emma* will not believe me guilty."

During this struggle, Emma amazed and alarmed at his hesitation exclaimed,

"Mr.

"Mr. St. Aubyn, why do you hesitate? why are you silent? You surprise, you *terrify* me, Mr. St. Aubyn!"

This was a stroke indeed; and his resolution almost failed him.

"So then *she* too will believe me guilty!" But filial piety prevailed, and with a look of desperate resolution St. Aubyn said, "Sir, I own and I deny nothing; but I beg you to dispose of me and to proceed as you think proper."

"There, you see!" said Mrs. Castlemain; and Emma, though even *yet* she thought him innocent, bewildered and miserable turned aside and wept.

"I shall certainly not harbour a thief in my house, sir," said Mr. Hargrave; "therefore you may decamp immediately:" and St. Aubyn bowing was about to leave the room, when Mr. Egerton, in a voice hoarse with emotion, seized his arm: "Mr. Hargrave," said he,

he, " if you turn this young man out of your house, why then, as the old lord says in the play, " I will receive him into ne."

" Yes; out of spite to me, I suppose?"

" No, sir; but out of justice to him. ok up, look up boldly, thou noble-nded being, and tell this hasty-judg- uncle of yours, that no guilt has ever ned either your heart or hand; and that you are now holily, though mis-takingly, taking on yourself the guilt of another."

" Heyday! What is the meaning of all this?" cried Mr. Hargrave.

" Oh, sir! what are you saying? what are you going to do?" said St. Aubyn; " I see you know; I am satisfied; pray let me . . . . ."

" Peace!" cried Mr. Egerton; " you have done your duty, young man; now let me *do mine*. Mr. Hargrave, your

nephew did *not* take the note,—but your sister did!"

"Very likely," replied he, "you per-suaded her to take the fault on herseli skreen her child:" vexed, Mr. Eger imagined, to find that the virtue and h reputation of his nephew were not stai with the fault imputed to him, but w likely to shine out greater than ever.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Egerton sar tically; "Mrs. St. Aubyn's known vir-tue and Henry's known vices make this likely, do they? You know *better*, Mr. Hargrave; but here is the note which your penitent and miserable sister desired me to give you. However, sir, to put her guilt beyond dispute, know that I *saw* her take it. My back was towards the table, but my face fronted the pier glass, and I happened to look in the glass just as Mrs. St. Aubyn took the note and put it in her pocket. At first I thought she did

it on purpose to alarm you; but the moment I looked at her I saw in her countenance and manner all the perturbation of guilt, and was meditating how I should act, hen your return brought the matter to risis, independent of me, and showed excellent young man in . . . . ."

There, there, you have said quite igh in his praise," interrupted Mr. grave; while St. Aubyn left the room abruptly in order to go and speak comfort to his mother. While he was gone, Mr. Egerton told Mr. Hargrave that he had informed Mrs. St. Aubyn that he had *seen the whole transaction,* and must to save her son disclose the truth; begging to know what the great distress was which could alone have led her to commit such an action,—and she had told him much to palliate, though not to excuse, her guilt; declaring her satisfaction at knowing her son's fame would be cleared, though ter-

ror

ror of her brother prevented her from doing it, and he hoped Mr. Hargrave would be as merciful to her as he could.

Emma and Mrs. Castlemain, though greatly shocked at a delinquency whic they could not conceive possible in a ra of life like Mrs. St. Aubyn's, earne joined the cry for mercy; but Mr. I grave vowed he would reduce her al ance one half.

"That is," said Mr. Egerton, "you will increase the poverty which was the occasion of her error. Is that wise?"

"May be not; but it is my will."

"Well then," said Mr. Egerton, "hear with indulgence the plan that I have to propose. Allow *me* to maintain Mrs. St. Aubyn in future as the mother of my adopted son should be maintained, and let me also maintain Henry St. Aubyn, and send him to College as my future heir."

At first Mr. Hargrave, irritated to mad-

ness

ness by this well-meant but most injudicious and ill-timed proposal, a proposal which, however it might flatter the avarice of this man of wealth, was calculated to wound a passion more dear, namely, that of his pride, was speechless with unutterable rage.

"'Sdeath, sir!" cried he at length, "do you take me for a pauper, that you offer to maintain my nearest relations for me? Have your newly-gotten riches turned your head, Mr. Egerton; and you think nobody is rich and benevolent but yourself? Sir! how *dare* you insult me thus? But mark me, sir; if either my nephew or my sister condescend to be your pensioners—I *will*—Yes . . . . ." added he, as if triumphing in some malignant recollection which gave him pleasure; "yes, that will do; and he dares not displease me."

"Mr. Hargrave, only hear me!" said Mr. Egerton.

"No,

"No, sir, I will hear nothing more on this subject; but I am not angry, sir, no, not at all; I owe you, on the contrary, a great obligation. Ha, ha, ha! so you wanted to take your pupil, did you, out of the clutches of his old crabbed uncle! I see it, I see it all—and instead of doing so, you have fixed him there firmer than ever. Ha! ha! ha! O these wise folks, how often they overreach themselves!" Then laughing within himself, and looking as maliciously merry as sir Joshua Reynolds's Puck, he left the room.

"What does he mean?" said Emma.

"I can't exactly tell," replied Mr. Egerton, pacing the room in considerable agitation, "but I fear I have done harm." St. Aubyn returned no more that evening, or rather not till the ladies from the White Cottage and Mr. Egerton were gone; nor did Mr. Egerton see him the next day as he had a right to expect, but

he

he received from St. Aubyn the following hasty note, written in a hand scarcely legible:

"My kind friend, and intended benefactor, accept my best thanks and blessings for your generous proposal! which I *never never* can accept, nor *any bounty from your hands.* How fondly my heart clings, and will *ever* cling to you and the dear inhabitants of the Cottage!—But I dare add no more, except that I am

Your faithful, grateful, and affectionate,

Though miserable,

HENRY ST. AUBYN.

"Ask me no questions, for mercy's sake ·k me no questions!"

This letter, evidently written in a moment of excessive agitation, and a total absence of judgement, because it said both too much and too little, gave excessive pain to Mr. Egerton, and still more to Emma. Mrs. Castlemain bore it

it more heroically; for, conscious how great an heiress Emma would be, she was not sorry to see that the growing attachment between her and St. Aubyn might be checked by circumstances arising out of the strange temper of his uncle; for though she never would have opposed a marriage between them, out of respect and gratitude to Mr. Egerton, whose wishes she was well acquainted with; still, as she was of noble descent herself, and nobly connected, she wished her heiress to marry the heir or son of some noble family; for though St. Aubyn's was ancient and honourable, it was not noble. Therefore while Mr. Egerton, alarmed more than he liked to own to himself, at the probable result of his avowed wishes, and quick sighted too late to what was likely to be the event of the transactions of the preceding day, sat brooding in melancholy reverie over St.

Aubyn's

Aubyn's letter, Mrs. Castlemain preserved a degree of composure which was most painful to his feelings, and said "All things are for the best—and Providence orders every thing for our good," so often and so provokingly, that, pious and good as Mr. Egerton was, he could scarcely help wishing to contradict her; while Emma wandered along the paths in solitary sadness, where she had lately roved with St. Aubyn, and tried to remember only his declaration, "that to the dear inhabitants of the Cottage his heart would fondly cling for ever." But when she again saw St. Aubyn, every hope that she had cherished, every prospect that she had contemplated, seemed extinguished and closed from her view. He came alone indeed,—but his manner was cold and restrained, his countenance bore the marks of excessive depression; he never looked at,

at, and rarely spoke to Emma,—though Mr. Egerton thought, and Emma too perhaps, that whenever she spoke he seemed to hang upon her accents with the silent attention of love, and to reply in tones softened by the influence of ardent though restrained tenderness. Mr. Egerton at last, unable to endure in silence a change so afflicting and so marked, took him by the arm, and demanded to speak to him in private. But as soon as he entreated to be told the cause of what he saw, St. Aubyn, with a vehemence, an agony not to be resisted, conjured him for mercy's sake to desist, and not to require explanations which he could not give, but to leave to him uninjured the only consolation that was left him under his misfortunes, the consciousness of fulfilling his duty, and of an unblemished integrity. "But one day, one day,

day, Henry," replied Mr. Egerton affected by his evident distress, "you will explain every thing, I trust."

"One day!" he exclaimed, "one day! Aye, sir, I trust that day will come, or I doubt I should want fortitude to bear up under the tortures of a lacerated heart and a wounded spirit."

"Your unhappy mother," said Mr. Egerton.

"Do not name that subject to me," interrupted St. Aubyn, "I cannot bear it—but she *is* my mother, she was left too to my care by a dying and revered father, and I *will* do my duty by her, come what may.—Sir, dearest and best of friends, I should say, I shall see you all once more, and only once; for I am going to College at last, I have prevailed on my uncle to send me, and in a few days I set off."

"In

"In a few days! Well, it is better not to see you at all, than to see you then."

"Oh, much better," replied St. Aubyn with quickness; "in this at least he is kind—and absence will be salutary."

They then returned to the ladies, and St. Aubyn soon after took his leave; but as he withdrew, he cast a look of mournful tenderness on Emma, which, during the many many long months of absence which succeeded, was the only comfort which her agitated bosom knew; for St. Aubyn returned not to the Cottage, but set off for Cambridge without bidding his friends farewell.

Various conjectures and everchanging surmises mingled with the painful feelings which this conduct in St. Aubyn occasioned both to Emma and Mr. Egerton, and unfortunately neither of them could have the relief of imparting their different

sensations

sensations and ideas to the other. Delicacy and pride, the pride and delicacy becoming her sex, forbade Emma to complain of St. Aubyn's conduct, lest the secret of her heart should be by that means discovered—a secret only recently discovered to herself—for Emma was not aware that her silence on this occasion was a proof of that love which she wished properly to conceal; as but for a conscious feeling of disappointed tenderness, she would naturally, from the quick feelings of a neglected friend, have clamoured against the strange conduct of St. Aubyn, and his blind obedience to what she considered the will and caprice of his uncle. But this well-meant silence spoke volumes of conviction to the heart of Mr. Egerton, and he felt with an agony of self-reproach, that he had done all in his power to encourage in his docile pupil an attachment which was likely to end in nothing

but

but miserable suspense and unavailing wishes.

Yet he had one consolation under his distress, and that was the consciousness that Emma in loving St. Aubyn was loving virtue; and while he respected the feelings of Emma too much to allude even in the remotest manner to the cause of her evident dejection, and even to endeavour to account for St. Aubyn's altered manner and conduct, he felt a firm conviction that those very changes were the result of some imperious necessity of which duty was the source, and he looked forward with certainty to the hour which should clear up the present mystery, and restore St. Aubyn to their society. But in the meanwhile he felt it to be his duty and that of Mrs. Castlemain to do all in their power to suspend in Emma's mind the images which preyed on it, and he therefore proposed excursions into different

parts

parts of England. But as soon as a certain number of weeks or months had elapsed, they returned home again, and occasionally saw St. Aubyn, who, with his uncle, paid his respects formally at the Cottage during the vacation; and their meetings, Mr. Egerton soon discovered, though painful in the extreme, were sufficient to keep alive in Emma's mind, not only the image of Henry St. Aubyn, but the dangerous conviction that he loved her spite of his behaviour, as an involuntary look of tenderness, and a sigh half suppressed, continually gave marks of feelings wholly contrary to the coldness he assumed, and added fresh fuel to a flame which absence and the total annihilation of hope might have been able to extinguish. But at length St. Aubyn ceased his visits entirely, and Emma became more and more dejected.

"This will not do," said Mr. Egerton

to Mrs. Castlemain, who mourned in secret over the faded cheek and abstracted air of Emma; "we had better resolve to leave this neighbourhood entirely:" and Mrs. Castlemain joyfully consented.

"But whither shall we go?" and Mrs. Castlemain answered, "To Roselands, to that seat which I have in the neighbourhood of the town of K——, in right of Mr. Castlemain."

"I did not expect," said Mr. Egerton to Mrs. Castlemain, "that you would propose going to Roselands, because I thought that place would be disagreeable to you, as it was there you lost Mr. Castlemain and your little girl."

"Some years ago," replied Mrs. Castlemain, "it would have been so; but I own to you that the presence of our dear Emma has so forcibly recalled to me the recollection of her mother, and of the ever dear and regretted object of my first and fondest

fondest love, that all other recollections have faded before them; and though on my arrival at Roselands, mournful and tender remembrances will no doubt recur, still they will be bearable and evanescent feelings, and the most powerful possessors of my affections will again assert their influence unrivalled." Mr. Egerton felt that this must be a true statement, because what it asserted had its origin in natural feelings, and feelings which he could comprehend; and saying, "You must be the best judge of your own sensations," the subject was dropt, and the journey to Roselands agreed upon.

This removal was even more necessary than they imagined. True it was that even Mr. Hargrave at length gradually ceased, as well as his nephew, to visit at the White Cottage, because in the first place he had never forgiven the scene at his own house, in which Mr. Egerton had

been so foremost an actor; and in the second, because he knew that without St. Aubyn his company had little charm for any one of the family; and he also always disliked those who preferred his nephew's society to his, though such a preference was very natural and irresistible. It should seem therefore that all intercourse with St. Aubyn, or knowledge of where St. Aubyn was, would have been wholly at an end, especially as Mrs. St. Aubyn also, too conscious to be easy in her company, had not returned the visit which Mrs. Castlemain had kindly made her, and had declined the acquaintance—But the fact was otherwise.

However short were St. Aubyn's visits to his uncle, during his residence at College he always contrived to steal out at night before the clock had struck eleven, and conceal himself in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Castlemain's abode, in order to catch a

sight

sight of Emma as she crossed the landing-place on her way to her own apartment; and once, when Emma, unable to sleep, had arisen, and come in the dark to an open window, she saw, unseen herself, a tall figure of a man walking slowly away, who, by his height and manner, she was convinced was St. Aubyn; and having once seen him, she watched for him several successive nights, and saw him come again and again. Once too she had left a small ruler in a summer-house at the end of a wood, and when she went back for it the next day it was gone; and as its value was very trifling, she suspected that St. Aubyn had visited the spot, and for her sake purloined it as a remembrance; and her suspicions were confirmed a short time after by the seeming reappearance of her rule on the same spot: but on examining it she found it was not her own, though it was one

so like it as to have made it impossible for her to have distinguished the difference, had she not been conscious of having scratched with a pin on the ivory her own initials and those of St. Aubyn.

Often, very often, too, did she see the footsteps of a man on her most favourite walks, the walks which she had trodden with him, which her heart whispered were the footsteps of St. Aubyn!

These proofs of still remaining and still ardent though concealed affection for *her*, kept alive in its utmost force her deep-rooted love for *him*; and though her pride and her delicacy revolted at the idea that she loved a man who had never solicited her love, yet she could not but feel an internal conviction, that he would have made such a solicitation had not an imperious necessity commanded him to forbear; while she lived over and over again in memory the happiness she had experienced

perienced only the evening before the sad exposure at Mr. Hargrave's, when on her falling from a piece of projecting rock, St. Aubyn, though she was not in the least hurt, was as much alarmed as if she had actually sustained an injury; and by the tenderness of his expressions, and the affectionate manner in which he supported her as they walked home, declared so plainly how fondly, how entirely, he was devoted to her, that she almost wished to meet such an accident every day, in order to be so questioned and so supported.

But all these consciousnesses and these recollections were food to a passion which she felt she ought to conquer, because it promised to be hopeless; and Emma forced herself to rejoice that she was going to leave scenes so destructive of her peace; for though she was sorry to be obliged to leave the school

she had established in the neighbourhood, and some other useful and praise-worthy occupations, she felt that to go was right, and to stay as improper as it was dangerous.

K—— was a provincial town near the northern coast of England; and though partiality to the beautiful estate in Cumberland, which she inherited from her ancestors, had made her prefer her White Cottage to Roselands, still Mrs. Castlemain was not sorry to have a sufficient motive for incurring the expense and trouble of removing to the latter residence.

"Besides, I was once there for some months," said Mrs. Castlemain to Mr. Egerton, "and I thought the society at K—— very good, though a country town."

"I do not wonder at that, my dear madam," said Mr. Egerton: "the society in country towns is composed of men

men and women made up of the self-same passions, the same virtues, and the same vices, as those are who inhabit the country itself, or a metropolis."

"I begin to feel impatient to be at K——," exclaimed Emma, "and wish we were to set off this moment!" Not that Emma anticipated in reality much pleasure from her new residence, but that morbid restlessness which ever attends a mind ill at ease, made motion and change desirable to her; and as she drove away from the Cottage she fancied she was driving away from the associations there which were wearing away her health and undermining her peace. And this happy illusion was prolonged by the sight of the new mansion itself; for it had every charm of architecture and of situation to recommend it; and in the richly decorated and spacious apartments Emma found some pictures by rare and excellent masters,

that gave her a degree of pleasure to which she had hitherto been a stranger. But as the environs of the White Cottage and even the town of Keswick itself did not afford much society, and that variety of human character and liveliness of event so interesting to a young and inquiring mind, Emma looked forward with eagerness to the hour when she should become acquainted with the wider society of K——, and make her appearance at a K—— ball. Nor was it long before her wishes were gratified.

As soon as it was known that Mrs. Castlemain, after an absence of many years, was returned to Roselands, many of those families whom she had formerly visited came to pay their compliments of welcome to her.

Contrary to her expectations, Mrs. Castlemain felt embarrassed while presenting Emma as miss Castlemain to these acquaintance,

quaintance, especially when she saw in their countenances an expression of wonder and inquiry who could miss Castlemain be! However, as Mrs. Castlemain did not explain, they were forced for the *present* to remain in ignorance; I say for the present,—because, as a gossiping spirit of inquiry is proverbial in a country town, it was not likely that any one of the parties should long remain ignorant on this subject, especially as amongst them was one lady who piqued herself on knowing the marriages and intermarriages of every noble or ancient family in the kingdom. Their curiosity indeed was soon gratified, as the ladies and gentlemen in question met that very evening at a rout, and naturally enough the first persons whose merits and demerits were discussed were the inhabitants of Roselands.

"I think," observed a gentleman,

"that Mrs. Castlemain looks excessively well."

"Indeed, poor woman!" returned a Mrs. Evans, a lady who affected great feeling, benevolence, and sentiment, and who had not yet called on her; "I am surprised at that, considering her years and what she has gone through! I have not yet been to Roselands, for I dread going. Poor dear Mr. Castlemain and I were such old friends, that the meeting between me and his widow, whom I have not seen since her loss, will be a very affecting one."

"Especially," observed another lady sarcastically, "as the afflicted widow is on the point of marriage with a third husband, if report says true."

"Impossible!" replied Mrs. Evans; "I can't believe my friend capable of a measure so derogatory: really if I thought she was, I would not go near the house."

"What, for fear such improprieties should

should be catching!" bluntly replied a gentleman to this lady of alarmed susceptibility, who like Mrs. Castlemain had buried her second husband. Mrs. Evans answered him only by a look of disdain.

"But pray," said she, "who may this third husband be?"

"Oh, that handsome, keen-looking, gray-headed man who lives with her."

"*Lives* with her!" exclaimed Mrs. Evans.

"Yes, madam," resumed Mr. Vincent, the gentleman who had before spoken: "may I beg leave to ask what are the improper ideas which your delicacy annexes to the term? But Mr. Egerton, whom I knew at College, is only on a *visit* to Mrs. Castlemain here, and does not live with her when in Cumberland; but he resides in a cottage near her, and is the preceptor of miss Castlemain."

"Of

"Of miss Castlemain!" exclaimed several ladies at once; "and pray who *is* miss Castlemain?"

"Aye," said Mrs. Rivers, the lady skilled in pedigrees, "aye, who is she? I am sure *I know*, whatever *you* may do."

"And I too, I hope," replied Mr. Vincent.

"Nay, I can't guess," said one. "We all know that Mrs. Castlemain left Roselands, because she could not bear to remain in the place where she had lost a husband and an only child."

"No, that is a mistake; she had a daughter then living by her first husband."

"She had indeed," said Mr. Vincent sighing.

"O dear, yes!" cried another; "a fine handsome girl, who ran away with a man named Danvers, a fellow whom nobody knew."

"No! there you must excuse me," observed

observed Mrs. Rivers conceitedly, and speaking very fast; "I know something on such subjects, and I can assure you the Danverses are a very old and respectable family. There's the Danverses of Shropshire, and the Danverses of Cheshire. The heiress of the Shropshire Danverses married sir Henry Douglas, whose sister married lord Clanross; and the Cheshire Danverses by marriage are related to the duke of Montagu; and a daughter of that family married general Nugent, whose sister was drowned on her voyage to the Cape of Good Hope."

"But what is all this to miss Castlemain?" said Mr. Vincent as soon as Mrs. Riv"s had talked herself out of breath.

"Oh dear!" resumed she, "I only meant to show that Mr. Danvers was not a man whom nobody knew; for that people of family themselves, and who therefore

therefore prize it in others, *know* that his family is both ancient and honourable."

"I am much more interested in what he was himself than what his family was," returned Mr. Vincent, "for the sake of the beautiful creature whom he married. I saw his wife, Agatha Torrington, when in the pride of her youth, her beauty, and her expectations, she made her first appearance at a race ball, and for the first time in my life I regretted that I was not a man of high birth and fortune."

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Evans, "who should ever have suspected Mr. Vincent of being tender and sentimental?"

"Those few, madam," returned he, "who look beyond the surface, and therefore might fancy me both because I affect to be neither."

"Well, but, Mr. Vincent," said Mrs. Rivers eagerly, "if you were so much charmed

charmed with miss Torrington, you will be pleased to know that there is every reason to believe this miss Castlemain her daughter."

"I suspected as much, madam," replied Mr. Vincent, "and am happy to find that Mrs. Castlemain received to her favour her daughter's unoffending orphan, though to her daughter herself she continued inexorable."

"How can you be so cruel and unjust," resumed Mrs. Evans, "as to blame my friend for her virtuous severity? How could she receive her daughter into favour when she knew her to be only Mr. Danvers's mistress, not his wife?"

"I am convinced, madam, that she could know no such thing, for I am sure miss Torrington would never have been the mistress of any man."

"I fear it is only too true," said a lady who had not yet spoken, "that miss

Torrington

Torrington was never married to Danvers; and on his marriage with another woman she lost her senses, and used to go about to different churches demanding a copy of her marriage register. I know this to be true, because I had it from a clergyman to whom she applied, and who was in fear of his life from her, as she accused him and the clerk of having destroyed the register, and threatened to prosecute them."

To an assertion so positive as this Mr. Vincent had nothing to reply. At length however he said, that as to Danvers, he believed him to be capable of any villainy; but that whether miss Castlemain was born in wedlock or not, he knew, from a servant who then lived with him, (but who lived with Mrs. Castlemain when Mr. Egerton arrived with the little Emma,) that the day after their arrival she called her servants into the room, and introduced

introduced the child to them "as her daughter and heiress."

"*There!*" cried Mrs. Evans; "you hear that—'as her *daughter*;' and then she gave her the name of Castlemain: whereas, if the child had had a name of her own, she would have introduced her as her *grand-daughter* miss Danvers!—Oh, it is as plain as possible; and I fear the other story is only too true, namely, that this miss Castlemain was miss Torrington's child, *not* by Danvers, but the man with whom she lived when she died, this very Mr. Egerton! Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Castlemain! it breaks my heart to think what you must have suffered from the errors of your daughter!"

"Surely, madam," said Mr. Vincent, "a lady of your exquisite benevolence, who feels so severely for the faults and griefs of her friends, should not be so ready to believe reports that militate against

against the fame and peace of others! What ground have you for the calumny which you have now uttered against that most respectable man, Mr. Egerton?"

"Oh, sir, I had it from undoubted authority."

"Name it."

"Excuse me, sir, I never give up names."

"No, you only make free with them. Mr. Egerton, to my certain knowledge, had never seen Mrs. Danvers but once, till he saw her on her death-bed."

"Dear me! Egerton! Egerton!" exclaimed Mrs. Rivers; "I wonder whether he is a relation of the noble family of that name; or perhaps he is of the Durham Egertons. The heir of that family, by the by, married a Castlemain, so it is very likely . . . . ." Here, luckily, she was interrupted by a summons to the card-

card-table; and Mrs. Evans and Mr. Vincent being called away for the same purpose into different apartments, they had no opportunity of resuming their angry altercation.

The next day Mrs. Evans was amongst the earliest of the visitors at Roselands; but her meeting with the lady of the house was not, as she apprehended, such as to affect the acuteness of her feelings. Mrs. Castlemain, who was usually cold and stately in her manners, did not at all relax in her usual stateliness at sight of Mrs. Evans; nor did the gathering tear in her eye declare that she either recollected "poor dear Mr. Castlemain" tenderly, or Mrs. Evans as his friend. The latter lady, therefore, who had taken out her pocket handkerchief and was beginning to sigh and look very pathetic, was obliged to resume her natural look, as reminiscences were not, she found, the

order

order of the day, and she was soon able to answer Mrs. Castlemain's inquiries concerning her acquaintances at K—— with her usual asumed benevolence and real malignity.

"Pray how are the Johnsons?" said Mrs. Castlemain.

"Oh, they live in a *great style*, and make a very fine appearance: and it is all very well if they can go on so; but there is such a family! Poor dear little things! my heart bleeds for them when I think what their fate may be!"

"Set your bleeding heart at rest then," observed another lady archly, "for their fate will be a very good one; as I know from authority that Mr. Johnson is worth at least 150,000*l*."

"I don't believe it," hastily replied Mrs. Evans, reddening violently; "that is, I mean I wish I could believe it."

"Pray, madam," interrupted Mrs. Castlemain,

tlemain, " let me inquire after that sweet little girl the daughter of an attorney at K——, who promised to be a perfect beauty."

" Oh, poor thing! she grew up to be both a wit and a beauty, and . . . . ."

" And what, madam? I hope no harm has happened," said Mr. Egerton smiling, " to a young lady so proudly gifted?"

" Harm, sir! No, not harm i.. the common sense of the word certainly,—for she is married very much above her sphere in life,—she is married to a young baronet of very large fortune, and who is also heir to a higher title, who fell desperately in love with her."

" She is very much to be pitied indeed," said Mr. Egerton ironically: " no wonder you called her 'Poor thing!' So, she is young, beautiful, and clever, and

is

is the wife of a rich young baronet who married her from disinterested affection!"

"You may laugh, sir," replied Mrs. Evans, "'but all is not gold that glitters.' It is said that her husband is a very gay man."

"Well, madam," said Mr. Egerton, affecting not to understand her; "and if she be a gay woman, and loves to laugh, so much the better for her."

"Nay, sir, by gay I did not mean lively, I meant that he is a very very libertine man, sir; and that she, poor thing! is pining herself very fast into a consumption! I am sure I did not believe this story till I could not help it, and I have felt a great deal for the anguish of her poor parents, who were so proud of their daughter's elevation!"

"For which, if this be the case, she

has

has paid dear indeed," observed Mrs. Castlemain: "but I never approved of unequal marriages."

At this moment Mr. Vincent was announced, and received by Mrs. Castlemain with marked cordiality. When she presented him to Mr. Egerton, he too seemed glad to see him as an old College acquaintance; but Mr. Vincent was so struck with the strong likeness that Emma bore her mother, who had really captivated his young heart the first time he beheld her, that he could scarcely speak the welcomes which he felt; and Emma, blushing at his earnest yet melancholy gaze, turned to the window.

"I have been making inquiries of Mrs. Evans, sir," said Mrs. Castlemain, "concerning some old acquaintances of mine at K——, and I am sorry to find that beautiful girl Mary Beverly has been so unfor-

unfortunate in her marriage, and is fretting herself into a consumption!"

"And you told this lie to Mrs. Castlemain, madam, did you?" said Mr. Vincent sternly, looking steadfastly at Mrs. Evans.

"Sir! sir! I told it because I do not believe it is a *fib*, for I scorn to repeat your vulgar word again."

"Yet you well know, madam, that I told you only two days ago, when you were repeating the same rancorous tale, which you and others believe true only because they wish it to be true, as they cannot forgive the sweet girl her good fortune; you know, I say, that I then told you, that from my own knowledge I could assert the whole story to be false."

"Madam," added Vincent turning to Mrs. Castlemain, "I must beg you to excuse my warmth, but I love the lady

concerning

concerning whom you have kindly inquired; and as I have lately been staying at her house, I am qualified to assure you, that if being unhappily married is having a husband that adores her, and if growing fat be any proof of pining in consumption, then is this lady right in her assertions, and my poor friend in a miserable way indeed!"

"Well, sir," replied Mrs. Castlemain, "I have no doubt you are right, and . . . ."

"I have great doubts still," angrily exclaimed Mrs. Evans; "for Mr. Vincent is so pleased with being this great lady's guest, that he is *bribed* to say what he has done."

"It is well for you that you are a *woman*, madam," replied Mr. Vincent, "or I should soon convince you that my honour is not to be questioned with impunity."

"We had better call another subject," coldly and proudly observed Mrs. Castlemain; and Mr. Vincent, again apologizing for his warmth, soon after took Mr. Egerton by the arm and led him to the end of the room, where with many apologies for the liberty he took, he begged leave to ask him whether that young lady was not, as report said, the daughter of Mrs. Danvers: on which Mr. Egerton gave him a short detail of Agatha's history, and, to his great joy, gave him another opportunity of contradicting the representations of Mrs. Evans.

In a short time Mrs. Evans was the only visitor remaining; when looking out of the window she exclaimed,

"Oh! that's the mayor's coach,—here comes his lady, I protest."

"Who is mayor now?" said Mrs. Castlemain.

"Your old acquaintance, Mr. Nares

the

the banker: he has married a second wife, and she is coming to pay her compliments to you;—but I wish just to say something concerning this charming but giddy creature."

"Giddy! Has then Mr. Nares married a young wife?"

"Yes, poor man! he has indeed! and I think it right to let you know that she has been a great deal talked of: there was a sad business about her and an officer, and almost half the town will not visit her: but *I* do, for I believe she was only *indiscreet*, not *guilty*; and therefore out of Christian charity and kindness I thought it right to take her by the hand, poor young creature, when no one else would; and now she is very well received. Still, lest some evil-disposed person should tell you this tale in order to prejudice you against her, I thought it right to be beforehand with them."

 "Upon

"Upon my word, madam," replied Mrs. Castlemain, drawing herself up even higher than usual, "I cannot see that it was at all necessary for you to give yourself this trouble; for I flatter myself that there is nothing about me to encourage any one to tell me a gossiping tale of scandal, as I have long been convinced that no one is ever told by another any thing but what that other supposes the person so addressed likely to relish."

The mortified Mrs. Evans was at first too much confounded to speak: at last she stammered out,

"That really there was so much ill-nature in the world, that ...."

"Aye, madam, so there is indeed," observed Mr. Egerton; "but never is ill-nature so odious as when it tries to hide itself under the mask of pity and benevolence:—don't you agree with me, madam?"

"O yes!

" O yes! certainly, sir," she answered in a hurried manner; and at this moment Mrs. Nares was announced.

In spite of the well-principled aversion and the well-grounded distrust which the quick-sighted family at Roselands were beginning to feel towards Mrs. Evans, they could not help being a little influenced by what she had said respecting the lady who now entered the room. But distance, suspicion, and reserve, vanished before the charms of her manners and her countenance, and Mr. Egerton did not wonder, if she added indiscretion to youth and her beauty, that half the town of K—— were too strictly virtuous to visit her. But Mrs. Castlemain's stately carriage evidently disconcerted her. However, blushing as she did so, she gracefully requested her acceptance of tickets for a public ball, to which Mr. Nares was to be steward; and Mrs. Castlemain

tlemain expressed her readiness to accept them. Mrs. Nares then sought relief from the awe impressed by Mrs. Castlemain, in a more familiar intercourse with her kind friend Mrs. Evans, who welcomed her with a sort of protecting air,—while the countenance and manner of Mrs. Nares to her, denoted such unsuspecting confidence in the reality of her friendship, that even Mrs. Castlemain, filled with pity and indignation at the treachery of Mrs. Evans, forgot that her new guest was said to be a woman of suspected character, and entered with alacrity into conversation with her. But in the mean while she had advanced greatly in the good opinion of Emma and Mr. Egerton, and rose in proportion as Mrs. Evans declined; for both ladies had brought a child with them. Mrs. Evans's was a girl about five years old, so spoiled and so humoursome, that it was very evident the

mother

mother had either not known or not practised her duty towards it. When de-red to say or do any thing, its only an-wer was, "No, I won't;" while it ever nd anon interrupted conversation with oud clamours of "Mamma, I will go iome!" till Emma did not know which vas most disagreeable, the mother or the hild.

Mrs. Nares's little boy, on the contrary, ough he was so beautiful that some others might have thought themselves cused for spoiling him on that account, s under such proper restraint, and so well brought up, that he always spoke when spoken to, and never otherwise; and the whole appearance and manner of the child argued so forcibly in favour of he good sense and propriety of the mo-her, that all Mrs. Evans had said was oon forgotten; and *indiscretion*, a great nd pernicious error in every woman, was

judged

judged wholly incompatible with the evident good qualities that Mrs. Nares as a parent possessed.

At length the ladies departed, and th family were left to comment on the variet of persons and characters, many of whic I have not mentioned, who that day cam under their review.

"Do you not remember," said Emma "an interesting anecdote of the poo Dauphin, who, when those horrible *po sardes* besieged Versailles, was taught his mother, who held him in her arr to clasp his little hands, and say '*Gra pour maman!*'"

"To be sure we do."

"Well then, Mrs. Nares's little boy's manners seem to cry '*Graces pour maman!*' for I find it difficult to believe that so good a mother should be so bad a wife."

"And so do I, Emma," replied Mr. Egerton; "for I think it a very fair conclusion

usion, that when a woman performs
ne duty well, she is not very negli-
ent of others; for I believe the virtues,
ke the vices, are so fond of one another,
hat they are seldom or ever found sepa-
ate: and I believe, if a virtue or two be
ometimes found crowded in amongst
many vices, that they are there only like
sprigs of geranium set without roots in a
garden, which before they have time to
take root there are thrown down by the
first shower or gust of wind, and are no
more seen or heard of. But did you ever
ee so odious a child as that little girl?"

"Hush! hush! dear sir," cried Emma
ughing and blushing, "I cry '*Graces
our cet enfant*' for my sake; for *in-
deed* I saw in that disgusting child my
wn likeness when I first knew you, and
could hardly help saying, 'Pray, my
ar, is not your name Emma?'"

"Indeed, Emma," cried Mrs. Castle-

 main

main in great emotion, "I cannot bea to hear you calumniate your mother s far as to compare yourself to that rud and spoiled child!"

"I calumniate my mother! God for bid!" cried Emma, "My poor mother it was no wonder if she did spoil me, fo I was her all, you know."

"I *do* know it, I know it but too well, miss Castlemain;" while Emma, shocked at the inconsiderateness of her reply, was, like Mr. Egerton himself, unable for a few minutes to change the conversation or give a pleasanter turn to it. At lengtl however she said,

"Yet fond of me as my mother was she had strength of mind enough to cor rect me very severely when she though such correction necessary for my good."

"Aye, indeed!" said Mr. Egertor "as when, pray?"

"Oh! never but once, and then I sh

remem

remember what passed to the last day of my life. She had given me a piece of cake, and I some time after asked her for another; on which she replied, 'Have I not already given you some?' when I, inking it better to tell a fib than lose y cake, replied, '*No*, indeed you did In an instant her face became quite ole with rage; and giving me a blow almost felled me at her feet, 'You a base and mean-spirited liar,' she aimed, 'and I am ashamed to own for my child! Hence from my sight, dare to come into my presence again lay.' It was the first and last time I saw her angry with me: but her resentment did not end with the im- se of passion. She made me go to rch the next day in my oldest and iest coloured frock, telling me that thing was good enough for a liar to ir; and that till I had the *spirit* of a gentle-

gentlewoman's child I should not wear the dress of one."

"Well! I think for a first fault my daughter need not have been so severe."

"Surely, dear grandmother, as it was a first fault, it was the more necessary be so; for, though I did not know wh I considered lying to be so terrible a fence, from this unusual severity in indulgent mother, that I was terr from committing it again; and as I older and found myself fondly care whenever I spoke the truth, fearless consequences, the habit of ingenu ness which you have so often commen in me, was impressed on me too deep trust, to be ever eradicated."

"Well, well, I am sure I am disposed think your poor mother right,—but le drop the subject, and tell me what think of Mrs. Evans."

"Think of her!" cried Emma. "W

do you remember, grandmother, that I used to say to you when you wanted me to take a pill wrapt up in currant jelly,—'No, no; when you give me physic, give me physic; when sweetmeat, sweetmeat;' and so I used to make a wry face, and swallowed the physic as physic."

"Well, and what is this to the purpose?"

"Why, Mrs. Evans appears to me ıysic wrapt up in sweetmeat; for under ɛr jelly of pity and feeling is hidden the tter herb malevolence, and so forth. ow this is as odious to me as your phy- wrapt up in sweets; and I should like say to her, 'Good Mrs. Evans, say once, I rejoice in the distresses of my low-creatures, and that's the truth of ' I fear I was wicked enough to wish ıt honest gentleman who looked at me comically kind had knocked her down."

"So, then, you did observe something

parti-

particular in his expression when he looked at you?"

"Yes, my dear sir; and that he took you to the other end of the room. Well, sir, what was it for? Did he make proposals?"

"Proposals! What is she talking of?" cried Mrs. Castlemain. "To think of that child's talking of proposals, indeed!"

"And to think of a young lady wh is going to a K—— ball, and will pr bably open it with the mayor himsel being called a child!"

"How the girl's tongue runs toda Mr. Egerton!" said Mrs. Castlemain smi ing.

"I am glad of it," replied Mr. Ege ton, "for it shows a heart at ease." B Emma, knowing this was by no mea the case, suddenly turned round and ha tily retired to her own room.

Mr. Egerton soon discovered, hov

eve

ever, that her heart was by no means as much at ease as he imagined. Going into her apartment one day, which she had only quitted meaning to return to it immediately, he saw some verses lying on the table, evidently wet from the pen; and concluding that verses not meant to be seen could not have been left so exposed to view, he ventured to read them.

When Mrs. Castlemain came to Rose-ds, she found the garden had been so ch neglected that weeds grew along parterre, and the spring flowers had nted themselves in the gravel walks. is circumstance occasioned Emma to te the lines in question, which were as ow:

IRREGULAR SONNET

N A NEGLECTED BUT BLOOMING GARDEN.

: on the weeded bed of yielding earth
om the bright flowers that in my garden grow;
Midst

Midst rougher soil they force their beauteous
birth,
And on thick turf or pebbly gravel blow.
Self-call'd they came, like friends in sorrow's
hour,
Who wait not forms, but aid uncourted bring;
And like yon welcome yet obtrusive flower,
O'er our rough path a rainbow splendour fling.

Sweet flowers! while wrapt in pensive thought I
stray,
Where still unlook'd for in my path ye bloom,
Fond fancy whispers that some cheering ray
Of future joy may chase my present gloom;
May, like your buds, opposing powers o'erco
And light, with gladness light, my clou
home.

"I wish I had not read it," Mr. Eg
ton had just said to himself, when Em
returned and saw the sonnet in his ha
as he had purposely kept it that she mi
know he had read it, though he did
know what to say to her relative to it.

"So, I see you have read my line
said Emma blushing deeply as she spo

"Ye

"Yes," replied Mr. Egerton, "and approve them too; my only objection to them is their solemnity,—but I hope your next will be of a gayer turn:" then without looking at her he left the room. While Emma, conscious how little likelihood there was that his hope would soon be gratified, vented her feelings in tears; and, afraid of being seen while under the influence of such painful sensa-[illegible]s, set off for a walk in the gardens [illegible] the woods adjoining.

[illegible]e assembly day at length arrived; [illegible] Mrs. Castlemain and Mr. Egerton [illegible] the first time for many saddened [illegible]s, and Emma for the first time in her [illegible] prepared for a public ball. Not [illegible] of them, however, looked forward [illegible]e busy scene with any one feeling [illegible]oyed by pain. Mrs. Castlemain re-[illegible]cted, as if it had been yesterday, the [illegible] when she had parted with Agatha

that

that she might be present at her first ball, that *fatal ball* which stamped with woe the future destiny of her life: and Mr. Egerton felt that the last time he had been present at such an amusement, he had danced with the lost object of his constant affections: and Emma recollected, in the secret recesses of her heart, how often she had hoped, and how certainly expected, that her first partner at her first assembly would have been Henry St. A byn! But no one communicated to other the feelings that were commo each, and they met with seeming c fulness in the drawing-room to await arrival of the carriage.

Mrs. Castlemain, in order to do nour to her old acquaintance the ma and to show her respect to her K- friends, made a point of appea in a new and handsome dress, an her family jewels. As her mind

now been for many years in a degree lightened of its overwhelming load, she had recovered her usual *embonpoint*, and her complexion had lost but little of its original loveliness. At this time, therefore, she looked considerably younger than she was,—an illusion heightened by the judicious manner in which she dressed herself; for, conscious that after fifty the less of the skin and form that is exhibited, more is gained in personal appearance vell as in propriety, Mrs. Castlemain ealed either with lace or fine muslin whole of her figure; while round only part of her once beautiful throat met the view, she wore a black vel- collar, which at once hid the as yet threatened wrinkles, and set off its remaining whiteness. Her dress for evening was black velvet, of which nly ornaments were point lace and ls; and on her still dark and glossy hair

hair she wore a simple though costly cap composed entirely of lace.

When she entered the drawing-room at Roselands, her smooth and finely-grained complexion flushed with emotion, and a sort of anxious expectation occasioned by the idea that she was going to introduce the child of Agatha at her first ball, Mr. Egerton was struck with wonder at her beauty, and the general magnificence of her appearance, and was gazing at it with resp ful admiration, when Emma appea glowing with youth and expectation, ply habited in a white crape dress, o. mented, as well as her head, with pe only. Both Mrs. Castlemain and Egerton looked at her with delight, tho a tear glistened on the eye of both.] was Emma as unmoved as she seemed tc but, substituting, like many other pec gaiety for cheerfulness, she held up white and dimpled hands with wonde

she looked on her grandmother, and, making a pirouette, exclaimed, "Well, I know who will be the handsomest woman in the room tonight!"

"That is very conceited in you, Emma," said Mrs. Castlemain smiling, and affecting to misunderstand her.

"What! is it conceited to be vain of one's own grandmamma?" replied Emma caressing her as she spoke.

I believe I may look well enough n old woman," she answered; "and dering . . . . ." then overcome by tender and many agonizing feel- she burst into tears and hastily re-

I suppose she is thinking of my poor er," said Emma in a faltering voice: how well, how even beautiful she !"

he does indeed," said Mr. Egerton: "and

"and how judiciously she dresses herself!"

"Judiciously!" replied Emma.

"Yes: and were she, instead of being indifferent to her personal graces, at all inclined to the hope or wish of conquest, I should even have said how *coquettishly* she is dressed! for I never saw any one who at her time of life better understands the art of clothing judiciously. I have often thought th[illegible] beauty of fifty should imitate the exa[illegible] of a skilful general after the battle o[illegible] day is over and a retreat is sou[illegible] The general, previous to beginnin[illegible] other attack, takes an accurate surv[illegible] his remaining forces; and when h[illegible] ters the field again, he puts in fro[illegible] in full view the strongest part of [illegible] but takes care to conceal from th[illegible] that in which he is conscious of wea[illegible]

In like manner, a faded beauty should be careful to hide by dress whatever, according to the regular progress of decay, is the indication of age in the female figure, and to set off to the best advantage whatever beauty time has touched with a more gentle hand."

"Really, dear sir," replied Emma, "it would be only kind in you to publish a ...azine of instructions for elderly la... in the art of dress, embellished with ...gnette of my grandmother by way ...llustrating your meaning."

...efore Mr. Egerton could reply, Mrs. ...lemain returned, and soon after they ...ff for the ball.

... I hope," said Emma when they were ...d in the coach, "that the greater ...of the inhabitants of K—— resemble ... pretty mayoress rather than Mrs. ...s."

... My dear child," replied Mr. Egerton,

ton, "very possibly the pretty mayoress herself may resemble Mrs. Evans, as most human beings resemble her also."

"What a libel on human nature!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain.

"If the truth be a libel on human nature, I am sorry for it; but I am sure that I speak only the truth."

"I hope not; but if it be so, why, my dear sir, do you wish to thro[illegible] gloom over the prospects of this yo[illegible] charge of ours, by representing hu[illegible] beings in so unamiable a point of vie[illegible]

"Do you wish me to deceive her [illegible]

"I would rather that you should, [illegible] speak truths calculated to destroy t[illegible] blissful illusions on which so much of [illegible] happiness of youth depends."

"But admitting, which I will [illegible] admit, that happiness can have a s[illegible] foundation on delusion, youth is b[illegible] small part of human existence; a[illegible]

think it is the duty of a preceptor to prepare his pupil's mind in such a manner as to fit it for every stage of life. Illusion, we all know, must end in disappointment; and there is nothing that has such a tendency to sour the temper, and deprive the mind of energy, as disappointment. The young, who are not taught to believe all human character imperfect, are only too apt to set up idols to worship, and to fancy the acquaintance, the friend, the lover, or the mistress, devoid of blemish either of mind, heart, or temper: but time, circumstances, and rivalship, most probably unveil the real character, and the poor dupe learns not only to mourn past confidence betrayed, but to give up all hope of ever feeling confidence in future. But this would not be the case, if to the young was exhibited a picture of things as they are."

"Disappointment, I own," said Mrs. Castlemain,

Castlemain, "would be avoided, but years of happiness or confidence would also be lost: and what then would they gain by the exchange?"

"Much, in my opinion, of the greatest importance to the improvement of the heart and character, and to the safety of the temper."

"Explain."

"I would wish to impress on the young mind this painful, degrading, but salutary truth, that 'envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,' are the most frequent and the most general of all human passions. If they were not so, should we have been taught to pray publicly every week to be delivered from them? I would impress on the young mind, that even those who are capable of honestly and deeply feeling the distresses and misfortunes of their friends, are often very much mortified at their

success

success and elevation. That, generally speaking, the elevation of a friend or acquaintance above ourselves, either in fame, rank, or wealth, is a crime against our self-love, which we never thoroughly forgive; and that we seize with eager avidity on any dirty story, however improbable, which tends to lower the individual, so favoured and so envied, in the scale of happiness or reputation."

"A dreadful, but I trust an exaggerated, picture!"

"You are a strong painter, Mr. Egerton, but you are one of the black masters!"

"I am particularly fond of those masters," replied he smiling; "and as I am convinced even their darkest tints and shadows are all to be found in nature, I think you flatter me by the comparison."

"But I am anxious to know how a

young mind can be benefited by being taught to believe ill of all the world."

"That is not a fair statement;—but let me go on:—It would be benefited thus: A tendency to overrate the virtues, and to be blind to the weaknesses, of others, has a most pernicious effect on our own character: our self-love forbids us to suppose that we ourselves are not as virtuous and as free from weakness as other people: therefore to those best and most necessary friends, self-examination and self-condemnation, we become wholly strangers: whereas, if we look upon certain mean but natural passions to be common to all, we cannot deceive ourselves so far as to believe that we are exempt from them. Consequently, we shall be on the watch for every rising tendency to them in our own breasts; and being conscious of a fault is one very important

ant step to an amendment of it. I have sometimes with disgust and contempt heard hoary-headed sentimentalists, persons grown old in worldly experience, with whining candour and pretended generosity declare, that it is most unjust and cruel to judge thus harshly; while, like the simple girl in the play, they exclaimed, on being told of the errors of others, the result of malice and envy,

'Can there be such, and know they peace of
mind?'

When, before an hour was at an end they would themselves utter something dictated by those very passions, the existence of which, as common agents on the actions and language of men, they had so strenuously denied."

"I feel the weight of what you say," replied Mrs. Castlemain: "still, I doubt not our poor Emma here would have

been

been glad to have thought higher of human nature."

"But, my dear madam, it would have been more cruel to deceive her by a false representation of it. Suppose, Emma, (for I know you love a metaphor,) that you and I were approaching a large city, and I were to inform you, on hearing you admire the handsome churches, towers, and buildings, which we beheld before us, that the whole city was composed of such, and every part of it equally worthy of admiration; surely you would have great reason to reproach me with your subsequent disappointment, when you found, on your arrival, that these edifices were encompassed by mean, little, ill-built houses, and narrow streets, and dirty lanes?"

"Certainly, sir."

"But if, on the contrary, I told you that these fine buildings were so surrounded,

but

but that the small houses, narrow streets, and dirty lanes, were necessary to carry on the common business of life, you would not only feel no disappointment on entering the city, but you would be contented to bear with its defects for the sake of its beauties. It is thus with human life and human character, Emma: we must all of us forgive each other's faults for the sake of each other's virtues: but we must not be guilty of the pernicious vice, not virtue as some call it, of blinding ourselves to the faults of others:—in the first place it has, as I have before observed, a tendency to blind us to our own: in the next, it only prepares for us the agonies of disappointment; for disappointment is always the offspring of error, by blind and ill-founded expectation. You see, ladies," added he, "that I cannot leave off the habit of preaching; and a pretty long sermon you have had!"

"I thank

"I thank you for it for more than one reason, sir," cried Emma; "for I thought I was only going to a ball; but you have convinced me I am going to a ball and *masquerade*, where many Mrs. Evanses will be walking about, affecting to be the thing they are not."

"Aye, Emma, till passion and circumstances, like the call to supper, or the morning light, cause the mask to be taken off, and the person to appear what it really is."

Here the coach stopped at the assembly-house, and Mr. Egerton had not an opportunity of preaching any longer.

Though out of compliment to Mrs. Castlemain the steward would not have allowed the ball to begin till she arrived, had she come ever so late, still, as she knew the usual hour of beginning was nine o'clock, she was too well-bred not to accommodate herself to the usual hour of

the

the place, and she entered the ball-room before many persons of less consequence had made their appearance.

Emma, having no rank, could not have begun the ball, because there were young ladies present who had claims to precedence, if she had not been a stranger; but according to the polite, and I may add benevolent, regulation of the K— balls, a stranger lady was always provided with a partner if she wished to dance, and was uniformly allowed to begin.

The mayor himself, having given up dancing, presented his son to Emma, who accordingly was led by him to the top of the set.

The unfortunate mother of Emma was a remarkably fine dancer, and it was fortunate for her child that she was so, as otherwise her proficiency in dancing could not have been very great. But

Agatha, knowing that grace of motion and activity of limb are only to be acquired by practice and habit in the earliest years of childhood, began to teach Emma to dance when she was only four years old; and when she died, Emma knew in that art all her poor mother could teach her:—therefore a lesson which she received once a week from a master who resided at Kendal, and gave lessons in the neighbourhood, was sufficient to keep in her memory all she already knew, and to teach her whatever she was still ignorant of. But notwithstanding she had reason to think herself a very good dancer, she trembled with diffidence and emotion at performing before so many spectators; while the natural bloom of her cheek was heightened by the mantling glow of modesty.

Mr. Egerton's eyes followed her down

the dance with admiring and gratified affection; but Mrs. Castlemain, still unable to separate the idea of Agatha from that of Emma, was so agitated, that it was with difficulty she could command herself so far as to remain in the room.

The first two dances being over, Emma's partner, a young barrister of very agreeable manners and conversation, begged leave to introduce a partner to her for the next two dances. Accordingly, a vulgar-looking young man, who was, as Mr. William Nares had informed her, one of the first beaux in the town, was presented to her by the name of Popkison; while Mrs. Castlemain, leaving Emma to the care of a lady, was glad to join a party to the card-room, and endeavour to calm her mind by cards.

Though Emma had never been at a public ball before, she had been at priv te

ones

ones in the neighbourhood, and was therefore conversant with the usual rules on such occasions: but if not, her own good sense and love of justice would have taught her, that it was only fair that the person who had stood at the top during two dances should go to the bottom during the two next. She accordingly took her place at the bottom of the dance.

"Why, what's that for, miss Castlemain?" said her new partner: "Why, to be sure you don't mean to stand here?"

"Indeed I do, sir; it is my proper place, as I began the two last dances."

"Well, but what does that signify? The misses here, I assure you, never mind that; but 'tis first come first served, and there is always such pushing and pushing! Come now, let us go up higher. I know some kind body or other will let us in.

I see

I see a good-tempered girl yonder, she will let us in above her."

"I cannot suppose, sir," said Emma, "that any young lady will be kind to me, a stranger, at the expense of other young ladies her acquaintances; nor has she any right to oblige one at the expense of many."

"Oh, that is her concern, so don't be so scrupulous, it is always done; and I assure you nobody here, that is *somebody*, ever stands at the bottom."

"I should rather think, sir," replied Emma smiling, "that it is somebody who is *nobody* that is thus presuming; as persons of real consequence are usually better bred than to assume rights which they have not:" and the young man, finding that he could not gain his point, said within himself, "What a queer fish she is!" and was silent for a minute or two.

"Well,

"Well, miss Castlemain, how do you like these parts?" resumed he, after a pause.

"Very much, sir: the country around is pretty, and well cultivated, though not grand. There is a gentleman's seat a few miles off that is a very desirable residence."

"Oh! I suppose you mean Mr. Wells's, or squire Wells's, as we call him?"

"I do."

"Aye aye, let you young ladies alone for finding out the rich bachelors. There, there he is! Now what say you to setting your cap at him? Shall I introduce you?"

"No, sir," coldly and proudly replied Emma, disgusted at his forwardness: "I am not in the habit of courting the acquaintance of any one." Then, in order to change the discourse, she inquired the

name

name of a fine-looking woman who was standing near them.

"That! Oh, she is one of the has-beens. She has nursed me on her knee many is the time and oft."

"That lady! I should not have supposed she was thirty!"

"Thirty, and sixteen added to it, more likely. But what do you think of our mayoress? is not she a pretty creature?"

"Oh, very; and pleasing too."

"Yes; and *fond* of pleasing. But you know, if an old man will marry a young wife, he must take the consequences—ha!"

"Mr. Nares is a very young and well-looking man," said Emma gravely.

"So he is for his years, fifty-six turned: but he is gray; so the joke here is, that he is the gray mayor, but not the better horse, for madam drives."

"Drives!

"Drives! a gig, or a curricle?"

"Poh poh, you are a rogue; you know what I mean: that is, she has her own way."

At this moment Emma caught the eye of a lady whom she had seen at Roselands, and curtsied to her.

"What," said Popkison, "do you know old Peg?"

"Not I, sir. Pray who is old Peg?"

"Why, you curtsied to her this moment."

"That, sir, was miss Mortimer."

"I know that; but we call her old Peg, or Peggy. *Miss* Mortimer! yes, and a fine old miss she is! I know the year she was born in."

"But why, pray, sir, do you call her old Peg? She seems a very well bred, pleasing woman; and age, if she be aged, is not a crime in K——, is it?"

"No. But by way of fun and joke we call her so. To be sure she is a good-natured, inoffensive, excellent creature."

"You seem to be great jokers here, sir. And so the distinguishing reward for good nature, inoffensive manners, and excellence, in the town of K——, in a woman, is the appellation of 'Old Peg?' I suppose, sir, you call a good-natured, inoffensive, excellent man, Old Harry?"

"Ha, ha, ha! very good indeed! A good joke, eh?"

"I am sure, sir, I did not mean it for one. Really, sir, you are very facetious persons here."

"Why, that's true. There is a set of us, to be sure, who do love fun and joking, and who make very free with our neighbours sometimes."

"I hope your neighbours return the compliment."

"Oh, they are welcome; 'Give and take' is my motto. Why, there's Dick Mullins, and Jem Hanway, and two or three more, when we get together we are very funny, sure enough; and we do give comical names to people. Jem Hanway is a most excellent mimic, and it is such fun to see him take off every body!"

"I dare say; and how pleasant it would be for you to get unperceived behind a skreen, and hear him take yourself off!"

"Why, that's true, to be sure, that one should not much like."

"Oh! you forget—'Give and take' is your motto; and if you like to see your friends served up for your amusement, it is only fair you should be served up in your turn for theirs."

"Yet,

"Yet, if I thought he *did* mimic me, I would break every bone in his skin."

"Right; and all I wish is, that every one whom he does mimic would do the same."

Here Popkison left her for a moment to go and whisper in a gentleman's ear who was dancing with a lady who had only one eye; and coming back with a face brimful of laughter, he said, "I beg your pardon for leaving you; but I could not help going to whisper Sam Vernon, who is dancing with that one-eyed beauty; I told him, as she is so rich, it would be wise in him to get on the blind side of her."

"And did you really whisper concerning the poor girl's personal defect to the gentleman with whom she was dancing? Suppose she had overheard you?"

"Oh, she would not have minded; for

for she knows she is called miss Polypheme."

"And is she?"

"Yes; and once Dick Mullins, from use, forgot to call her by her own name, and called her miss Polypheme to her face."

"How cruel!"

"Oh, but he did not mean it; and after all it was only a joke."

"*Only* a joke! If, sir, you and this Dick somebody are capable of being amused with jokes on the deformities of your fellow-creatures, you can never want for mirth certainly: but you obtain it at the expense of all the finer feelings of human nature."

Popkison, piqued at the animated contempt which beamed in Emma's expressive face as she spoke, and unable to answer her, looked up saucily in her face and said, "Pray, madam, are you bring-

ing up to the church? for I never heard a young lady preach such fine sermons before."

"No, sir," replied Emma, laughing at this fair retort; and was going to say, "I conclude that you are already brought up to the bar, by your ready impudence;" but wisely recollected that it would be unbecoming her to imitate the pertness and sarcasm which she condemned.

Emma was little aware what ample revenge for her just severity it would soon be in Popkison's power, unintentionally, to inflict.

"I think, miss Castlemain," said he, "that I know some one from your part of the world. Does not Harry St. Aubyn live near you?"

"He does, sir," replied Emma blushing, and alarmed at hearing that name pronounced, and pronounced by such a person.

"I was

"I was at College with him; he is a fine-looking fellow, though rather a quiz, and rather a formal chap, for he would not drink, and used to study all day."

"Is that uncommon, sir? I thought young men went to College on purpose to study."

"Ha, ha, ha! What an antediluvian idea! Study is very well in its way, but to do nothing else is a horrid bore. Do you know one Alton?"

"No, sir."

"Why, he is a great friend of St. Aubyn's. Alton is a short, thick-made, fat little fellow, and so nervous, that if he is alarmed or agitated at all, he stutters most laughably: so some of us, who loved fun, used to like to tease him in order to set him a-stuttering; and you know there was no great harm in this—only a little sport or so."

"No, certainly,—only the fable of the Boys and the Frogs."

"Aye; so St. Aubyn used to say; and he never would let us make fun of Alton in his presence: and as he is a devilish strong-built fellow, and has a good large fist of his own, we thought it as well to let Alton alone; but we nick-named St. Aubyn Don Quixote, and Alton his Sancho Panza."

"That was witty indeed; but no doubt the same laudable fear of consequences which led you to avoid laughing at Alton in St. Aubyn's presence, prevented you from calling him and his friend by their nick-names in his hearing?"

"Why, yes."

"And pray, sir, may I ask you in what you took your degree at College?"

"Degree! Why, I did not stay long enough. Bless your heart! I thought it a horrible bore to be forced to get up

willy nilly to prayers at seven o'clock in the morning, or incur certain consequences; and really, as I never got up time enough to tie up my stockings before I went to chapel, I used to get the rheumatism in my knees."

"Poor man! The rheumatism!"

"Oh, poh! you need not look so compassionate; that's a joke."

"What, the rheumatism, sir?"

"No, that's no joke certainly: but I mean that I was laughing when I said I had it."

This was indeed a joke which Popkison had repeated several times as a clever thing, though our heroine was too stupid to understand it.

Just then the pretty mayoress passed, and Popkison stopping her said, "Here is miss Castlemain knows your cousin Harry St. Aubyn."

"No doubt she does," replied Mrs.

Nares.

Nares. "It is many years since I saw Henry; but I well remember to have heard him talk of his little playfellow."

"I did not know that you were relations," said Emma in some confusion.

"Very distant," replied Mrs. Nares. "It is through the Ainslies I am related Mr. St. Aubyn."

Here they had reached the top of the dance, and the conversation, to Emma's relief, was put a stop to.

Having danced down with only half the couples standing up who had begun, Popkison told Emma he supposed she would rest herself, and not join the second dance till it was near her turn to begin.

"No, sir," replied Emma, "let us do as we would be done by. If all dancers did as you recommend me to do, those who are at the bottom of a set would be served as you and I were just

now, and would have scarcely couples enough to form a dance."

"Well, and what is that to us? I always take care of number one. Pray, madam, are you related to Don Quixote, alias St. Aubyn?"

"No, sir."

"But you were playfellows together, Mrs. Nares said; and, upon my soul, I believe you read out of the same primer, for I never heard two people talk so alike as you and he."

"Sir," replied Emma warmly, "I thank you; for you have now, in my opinion, paid me the highest compliment I could receive from any one."

"So so," cried Popkison, "the Don has gotten a Dulcinea, I see;" and would have gone on on this scent much longer had not the dance been a double one, and the set so small, that to talk while they went up it was impossible; and Emma,

as

as soon as she had danced to the bottom, made her curtsey to her partner, and, happy to be released from him, joined the lady to whose care Mrs. Castlemain had left her. For she was indeed completely tired of him, as his whole conversation consisted of such jokes as I have enumerated above, hints and sneers against every one whom he mentioned, and an account of the age of every man and woman in the room, and the age of the latter given with such spiteful accuracy as Emma could only have supposed possible in the worst species of female envy. But spite is of no sex, and it is not always born of rivalship; it is as often the result of a mean malevolent pleasure taken by the person who indulges in it, in traducing and lowering every one that happens to come within reach. Nor can I allow that gossiping is a fault more common to women than to men. Emptiness of mind,

and want of proper and wholesome occupation, are common to both sexes, and consequently their result, a gossiping spirit and a traducing tongue; and though some faults like some diseases are for the most part confined to women; yet backbiting and slander, like the attacks of a fever, are common equally to both women and men.

Before Emma made Popkison her parting curtsey she assumed a very arch look, which he in vain tried to understand, and said, "I could not for some time imagine how you could have opportunities of knowing the ages of all those persons whom you have named to me; but at last I have found it out;" and before the inquisitive beau could tease her, as he meant to do, into an explanation, she had entered into conversation with Mr. William Nares.

"I am going to quarrel with you, sir," said

said she to the latter, assuming a very angry look. "I did not expect that you would have paid me so bad a compliment as to introduce to me so improper a partner."

"Improper! Believe me, madam, he is one of the first young men in the town."

"Then so much the worse for K——, sir; for I am convinced by his knowledge of every one's age what his situation in life must be, and that he is the clerk of the parish."

Young Nares immediately understanding her sarcasm, and disliking Popkison, told it to his father, his father to another, that other to two or three more; and the mortified beau had at last the pain of finding, through the means of some good-natured friend, that he who had no pleasure so great as that of turning others into ridicule was now the object of ridicule himself; and he saw that he would be called

the Parish Clerk for the rest of his life. In vain did he take his revenge by calling Emma the young Parson. He was told the idea was not new, but borrowed from Emma's name for him; and though he related his happy repartee to her over and over again, no one believed it, till wearied and angered beyond measure he quitted the ball-room, wishing Emma had been a man, that he might have had the satisfaction of caning her.

Emma having refused to dance again, and Mrs. Castlemain being tired of cards, she proposed they should return home, and Mr. Egerton and Emma cheerfully acceded to her desire.

"Well, ladies," said Mr. Egerton as soon as they were seated in the coach, "how has your evening pleased you?"

"For my part," said Mrs. Castlemain, "I fear I must own that pain has preponderated over pleasure; and much of

this

this was owing to you, Mr. Egerton. The picture of human nature which you had drawn previously to our reaching K——, in spite of myself was ever before my eyes, and made to me a sort of glass, distorting like a concave mirror, through which I viewed the actions and conduct of every one during the whole evening."

"Say rather that you viewed every one not through a distorting medium, but with clearer optics than you did before."

"And what have I gained by that? Oh, what ill-nature there is in the world! Would I could get back my happy ignorance! for really I must say with the poet,

'——where ignorance is bliss,
''Tis folly to be wise.'"

"A very pretty thing, my dear madam, for a poet to say, but a very bad rule to be acted upon in our passage through life, and for this best of all possible reasons, that it is not true. But what was this ill-nature? I suppose you

heard

heard of several marriages that were going to take place?"

"Yes."

"And I dare say not one of them was allowed to have any prospect of happiness."

"Scarcely one, certainly," replied Mrs. Castlemain.

"Aye, I can imagine what was said. I once lived in a country town, and I always observed that a reputed marriage was sure to call forth all the malignity not only of acquaintances but friends. Madness, scrofula, bad temper, libertinism, extravagance, and all the curses of life, were immediately imputed to one or other of the poor creatures that were looking forward in the simplicity of their hearts to conjugal felicity: and it is astonishing how long the town used to feast on this cheap dainty. Indeed, a projected marriage in a place like K——, is a treat given at the expense of the lovers and their families to the whole town, while

'envy,

'envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness,' like the harpies of old at the table of Phineus, cover the entertainment with their filth; though, unlike that of the harpies, their presence is not known to the entertained; but the good souls, while indulging their bad passions to the utmost, believe that they are only actuated by a sincere interest in the well-being of the poor victims of their busy tongues. The wise son of Sirach," observed Mr. Egerton, "says, 'There be three things that my heart feareth; and for the fourth I was sore afraid,—the slander of a city,—the gathering together of an unruly multitude,—and a false accusation: all these are worse than death.'—Now all these things, my dear madam, you probably have encountered this evening; for you have heard the slander of a city, and many a false accusation, no doubt; and

what is a crowded assembly but the gathering together of an unruly multitude?"

"An unruly multitude, indeed!" cried Emma laughing: "there was amongst the dancers, at least, such jostling and crowding and trying for precedence! and such a selfish disregard of other persons' pleasure exhibited, by many couples sitting down as soon as they had danced down the dance!"

"That is a most base practice indeed," said Mr. Egerton. "I declare that were I a marrying man, I should be afraid to marry a girl that I saw make a practice of quitting the dance when she had taken her own pleasure, and, regardless whether others had theirs or not, did not join the dances again till it was near her turn to begin."

"But why judge a girl from this action? this one action too?"

"Because

" Because the general temper and disposition are often shown in one action, however trifling: and it is evident that she who is thus selfis hin her amusements is selfish in little things;—a terrible trait in a wife! The happiness of the married life depends in a power of making small sacrifices with readiness and cheerfulness. Few persons are ever called upon to make great sacrifices, or to confer great favours; but affection is kept alive, and happiness secured, by keeping up a constant warfare against little selfishnesses: and the woman who is benevolent, and habitually fond of obliging, will, regardless of herself, be benevolent and obliging even in a ball-room."

" But tell me, Emma, how have you been entertained?"

"Oh! much, very much, on the whole. I was pleased with my first partner, and I had agreeable conversation with two or three

three persons, and wholly unstained with scandal or calumny. My second partner, however, was a sad counterbalance to these advantages."

"Yes," replied Mr. Egerton; "but I was sorry to find that you took such ample revenge on him for his delinquency."

"How!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain: "pray what was the delinquency, and what the revenge?"

"Why, madam, it seems that as he amused her with a minute detail of the ages of every person in the room, Emma had the malice to tell Mr. William Nares that she concluded he was the parish clerk; and the Parish Clerk the poor man was not only called during the rest of the evening, but will be all the rest of his life, for a nick-name sticks to every one like a bur."

"Well, but, dear sir, where was the harm of this? Why, was I wrong in

throwing

throwing a poor little harmless bur at a man who himself throws darts and dirt at every one within his reach?"

"Such a man, I own, my dear Emma, deserves punishment, and I am only sorry that you were the inflicter of it.—Your youth and your sex make you an improper person to go about reforming the world; and silent contempt would have been in my opinion the only weapon for you to use against him; for you must see that what you said was only too much in his own way."

"I feel that it was so," replied Emma ingenuously; "but I assure you the error carried the punishment along with it; for I overheard a very pleasing young man say, on being asked to dance with me by Mr. Nares, 'No, no; she is a wit, I find, and I am not fond of encountering that sort of person.' But fore-warned fore-

armed,

armed, and I hope to profit, dear sir, by your lessons and my own experience."

And Mrs. Castlemain and Mr. Egerton, who forgot her fault in the ingenuous readiness with which she confessed it, forbore any further comments except those of commendation.

As it was now generally known that the family at Roselands wished to visit and be visited, invitation succeeded to invitation, and in paying and receiving visits several cheerful if not happy weeks passed away; for the society of K— might be called on the whole good society, though tainted with the usual vices of a country place,—or, I should rather say, of human nature, called more frequently into action by the operation of circumstances, the result of closer collision, and the greater jarring of interests and self-love, from the narrowness of the field of action.

But

But at length that morbid restlessness which ever attends disappointed affection again took possession of Emma; again her colour faded, her spirits flagged, and she ventured to hint that she was tired of Roselands.

"Then suppose we go to London," said Mrs. Castlemain, whose anxious and observant tenderness immediately took alarm. "We have," added she sighing, "business of some importance to transact there, and it is now the prime of the London season."

"The proposal delights me," replied Mr. Egerton.

"Then when shall we set off?" returned Emma.

"In a few days," was the reply, and Emma again vainly hoped to escape from her own heart. Three or four days before that fixed upon for their departure, they went to another public ball at K——.

As Emma had complained of indisposition lately, she had promised her grandmother to decline dancing: therefore the family appeared at the ball merely to have an opportunity of taking leave of those friends and acquaintance to whose civility they had been principally indebted during their residence in the neighbourhood.

During the course of the evening Emma had an opportunity of entering into conversation with sir Charles Maynard, the gentleman who had refused to dance with her because he fancied that she pretended to be a wit; and she had the satisfaction of finding that by the reserve of her conversation, and the modesty with which she gave her opinions, she succeeded so well in her endeavours to remove his prejudice, that he never left her to join the dance, but was her constant and assiduous attendant.

But

But her amusement was not derived entirely from sir Charles Maynard. A young man made his appearance at the ball that evening, whose dress, manners, and countenance, amused her excessively, though she had no conversation with him. His name was Varley; and the place of his residence, London; but he was come down to K—— on a visit to a relation. His mother, who was a widow, kept a lodging-house in Westminster, and a relation of hers had had interest enough to procure the son, who was about one-and twenty, a small place in the War-office, with the promise of future promotion. Meanwhile Varley, who was industrious and frugal, contrived in different ways to increase his little income; and to do him justice, he had a great variety of talent—for he could paint watch papers and transparencies, copy music to admiration, play on

on the tenor and flute very well for an amateur; he could dance admirably, and spout speeches, and enact scenes from plays with great excellence; and so infected was he with a love for the theatre, that his conversation was amusingly varied with quotations from Shakespeare and other dramatic writers. But I must now speak of his higher pretensions and attainments: he had a great command of language, and wrote prose and verse with equal facility, and I might add of equal merit; for though he had some talents, as he had no strength of understanding, they were like a thick embroidery on a flimsy gauze, and were of more detriment than service; while, like many people, he mistook a taste for literature for a power of excelling in it.

But Varley was of a very different opinion; and while he kept his muse in

breath

breath by constant exercise in diurnal and monthly publications, he looked forward to the time when he should distance past and present competitors in the race for fame, and shine a planet in the sphere of literature and the beau monde. For it was Varley's ambition to blend the poet and the man of fashion, and to be at once a beau and a bel esprit. Nature had indeed made him a very pretty man; he was tall, slenderly but gracefully formed, had a regular set of small features, a pink and white complexion, light hair and light eyebrows; but the judicious application of some dark substance improved the latter, and sometimes his natural bloom looked as if it was heightened by art. It must be owned, therefore, that Varley, with these pretensions to be reckoned very pretty, might without any great stretch of vanity fancy himself very handsome; and as his dress made him a beau,

and

and reading, and natural capacity, in his opinion had made him a *bel esprit*, it is certain that, as a beau and a bel esprit, he had a right to present himself to the town of K——, and to hope to astonish the natives, to use his own phrase, when in the spring of 1802 he made his appearance at a K—— ball, dressed in all the extremity of the mode. Fashion indeed was his idol, and he meant to be what he considered as fashionable in his attachments. He wished excessively to be in love, but as yet had found no object worthy of his heart and his muse; for as yet he was not introduced into that high life for which he panted. Therefore lady —— ——, the countess ——, and the honourable miss ——, could only be gazed at by him through a glass from the pit at the Opera; and as yet, at least, these admired ladies had not apparently noticed his personal beauty, or the graceful lounge

which

which distinguished him in fop's alley. In the mean while, he wished to become the lover of some beauty rather advanced in life, provided such beauty was of rank or fashion, and he was on the look-out for such an object when he came to the ball.

Varley had so much of the true Cockney feeling about him, that he fancied it was impossible there could be any thing so knowing or so tasty as himself in the room; and he walked up and down, concluding there was no one present fit for a Town man to dance with, when he was requested by a gentleman, whom he could not refuse, to dance one dance with a young lady who had sat still all the evening. Accordingly with an air and a grace, he complied, saying,

"Since you will buckle fortune on my back."

When he had begun the dance, not being yet satisfied with the notice he excited, he

took

took a pair of castanets out of his pocket, and by the novelty of the exhibition, and the admirable though affected manner in which he danced with them, called the attention of the whole room to him and his terrified partner. When he had done, he looked round with an air of great self-satisfaction; and the young lady declining to dance any more, though Varley said,

"O do not tear thyself away from me,"

he volunteered a few steps with the castanets at the end of the room, while Popkison went about proposing to go round with a hat for him, adding, "He is very poor, and I dare say the cash would be welcome." And to the ladies he observed, "Are you not fascinated by that rattlesnake?" and on these two new jokes Popkison valued himself highly.

By this time Varley found that he was become an object of attention to every one, and that delighted him; he also saw the

the eyes of our heroine, and the friend on whose arm she leaned, observing him with great attention; and concluding admiration was the cause, he began to look delightfully with all his might.

"Ha! Varley, are you there?" said a gentleman who then entered the room.

"Aye, my good lord, and your poor servant ever,"

he replied, bowing very low and affectedly. Then extending his hand to a young man, who now approached, he exclaimed, seeing that Emma and her friend were listening,

"I prithee, shepherd, if that love or gold
Can in this crowded place find entertainment,
Bring me where I may rest myself, and drink.
I am a youth with dancing much opprest,
And faint for succour."

"What! I suppose, in plain English, you want a seat, and some porter?" cried his friend bluntly: "the one you may fetch

fetch from the bar, and the other is behind you."

"I thank your courtesy,"

said Varley with a sneer, and seated himself beside him on the seat to which he pointed.

"Is all right in that poor young man's brain?" said Emma to sir Charles.

"Yes, if a brain can be said to be quite right that is nearly turned by vanity."

Varley, still seeing Emma's fine eyes following him, asked, "Who is that pretty girl

'That falls to such perusal of my face
As she would draw me?'"

"That pretty girl, as you call her, is a great heiress."

"The devil she is!" cried Varley, immediately adjusting his neckcloth, and stretching out one leg in what he imagined a becoming posture: "but is her fortune in her own power yet?"

"No;

"No; for her grandmother, the honourable Mrs. Castlemain, is not dead, nor like to die, but as strong and as good-looking as ever."

"What! has she a grandmother, good-looking, rich, a widow, and an honourable into the bargain?"

"Yes."

"And is she here?"

"Yes."

"Show her to me."

"She is not in the room at present; but surely a young heiress is a better thing than an old one."

"That is as people think," replied Varley conceitedly: "you country folks have vulgar every-day notions: the girl, that young thing, is not despicable certainly, but let me see her grandmother."

"Well then, so you shall, for here she comes!" and Mrs. Castlemain en-

tered the room, her cheek flushed with a very brilliant bloom, and looking, being attired in French gray satin, even younger than she did at the preceding ball.

Varley really was, to do him justice, as much struck with her beauty as he pretended to be; while turning away from Emma, and gazing on her grandmother, he theatrically exclaimed,

> "So doth the greater glory dim the less:
> A substitute shines brightly as a king,
> Until a king be by."

"My dear grandmother," said Emma, running up to Mrs. Castlemain, "here is the most amusing person! I think him a little mad and ——"

"Mad! child!" she replied. "I see nothing amusing in madness, that climax of human misery. But where is he?" And Emma pointed Varley out to her, who

who now rose in order to walk and show his fine person off, in hopes of charming as much as he was charmed—

"Oh! she doth hang upon the ear of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear,"

he exclaimed, as, taking hold of his companion's arm, he lounged up and down the room after Emma and Mrs. Castlemain, looking at the latter languishingly through his half-closed eyes; while she, wholly unconscious of her own power, imagined those dying looks and those sighs were all aimed at Emma. Emma herself was of the same opinion; and though not remarkably vain, she also took to herself the "beautiful! charming creature!" which Varley occasionally uttered when behind them. And as the ladies when they turned round saw Varley using extravagant gesticulation, Mrs. Castlemain's opinion of his madness became

a much more positive one than Emma's had been. Therefore, though she attributed his behaviour to admiration of Emma, she began to be seriously afraid of him. In early life, and when a young and beautiful heiress, Mrs. Castlemain had been excessively alarmed by a madman, who fell in love with her, and she was also in some danger from him. She therefore, naturally enough, feared for Emma the risk she had incurred herself; and when Emma said, " But if he were really insane, he would not be here," she with great propriety replied, " The gentlema[n] who persecuted me was at large, an[d] went to balls like other people: therefore, I really wish to go home directly; for yo[u] see the poor man never once takes hi[s] eyes off you, and his dress, his look[s] and his manners are all proofs of [a] deranged mind." She then requeste[d]

Mr.

Mr. Egerton to call up the carriage directly. Mr. Egerton did so; and Emma began talking to sir Charles Maynard, who said, that in order to mortify her pride of youthful beauty, he must inform her that he had discovered the object of Varley's passion was not herself, but her grandmother, and that Mr. Egerton could tell her the same.

While Emma was enjoying this information, and laughing with sir Charles, the carriage was announced; and Mrs. Castlemain desired Mr. Egerton to take Emma between him and sir Charles; "for indeed," said she in a low voice, "I do not like the looks of that young man."

"That is very ungrateful in you, and very hard upon him," said Mr. Egerton smiling: "but pray, if we do as you bid us, who is to take care of you?"

"Me!

"Me! I want no guard."

"There, madam, you are deceived. It is you who are the prize aimed at; you are the Hesperian fruit that requires a dragon to guard it."

"I cannot understand you, Mr. Egerton; and as the horses are waiting," replied Mrs. Castlemain angrily, "I must beg you will take Emma, as I desired, and let us be gone." Mr. Egerton and sir Charles immediately bowed and obeyed, while Mrs. Castlemain, thinking herself quite secure on the shady side of fifty, feared not the fate of Proserpine for herself. When Varley saw her going, he exclaimed to his companion—

"I now do penance for contemning love,
Whose high imperious thoughts have punish'd me,
Oh! gentle Tomkins, Love's a mighty lord,
And hath so humbled me, as I confess
There is no woe to his correction,

Nor

Nor to his service no such joy on earth!
Now, no discourse, except it be of love;
Now can I break my fast, dine, sup, and sleep,
Upon the very naked name of love."

"A very lucky thing," observed the purse-proud Popkison, "for a man of no fortune." While Varley, exclaiming

"I must be gone and live, or stay and die,"

ran out of the room to catch another look at his idol. Varley overtook Mrs. Castlemain just as she was left alone at the door, the gentlemen being gone to see Emma into the coach. This was an opportunity not to be lost. With a smile which he meant to be irresistible, Varley said, "Allow me the honour of conducting—" when Mrs. Castlemain, with a half scream, bounded forward, and did not stop till she found her hand in Mr. Egerton's.

When

When they drove off, and before Mrs. Castlemain was sufficiently composed to speak, Emma exclaimed, "Well, grandmother, whenever I mean to make conquests, I will not go into public with you; my youth has no chance against your beauty, I find; and the wretched Varley has received a mortal wound."

"I desire, miss Castlemain, you will not presume to laugh at me," she angrily answered. "Besides, it is very inhuman to laugh at the vagaries of a madman. Would you believe it, he spoke to me! and I was so terrified!"

"Believe me, madam," said Mr. Egerton, "he is no madman; though I fear he may be one when he finds you cruel, for he is dreadfully in love."

"If this be true, sir," replied Mrs. Castlemain in her most angry manner, "I wonder you can presume to assert that he is not mad; for what boy in his senses

would

would think of falling in love with an old woman like me?"

Neither Mr. Egerton nor Emma, could help laughing at the modesty of this speech. "Pardon me, madam," said the former, "but there is something irresistibly comic to me in your manner of proving Varley's insanity, who, I dare say, would be ready to exclaim,

'O! madam, who'd ever be wise
If madness be loving of thee?'

There is so much modest simplicity, and 'bonhommie' as the French say, in that answer!"

"I am glad it amuses you, sir. But I must say the whole thing is to me very disagreeable. Poor crazy boy! I am sure my heart bleeds for him."

"That is only retributive justice then," resumed Mr. Egerton: "but I assure you I met him this morning in a book-

 seller's

seller's shop, and had some conversation with him on books; and he being a collector of old editions like myself, I was much pleased with the meeting. He told me he possessed one very scarce book, but had it not with him here, else he would have shown it to me."

"What an escape!" cried Mrs. Castlemain, "for then he would have come to Roselands to bring the book! However, we are going away in a few days, so it is not worth fretting myself about such nonsense!" Then, as soon as they alighted, Mrs. Castlemain retired to her own room, in no little perturbation, and some indignation of mind; while Emma, though neither perturbed nor indignant, retired to bed any thing but calm and happy; for the pretty mayoress had told her that she had just heard from London, that St. Aubyn was seen there very gay and gallant, and escorting the beautiful

Mrs.

Mrs. Felton every where; while report represented them as shortly to be married.

It had been with some difficulty that Emma had summoned resolution to say, "And where is Mr. St. Aubyn now? in London?"

"No, he is, I believe, returned into Cumberland;" and Emma felt relieved to hear she was not likely to meet St. Aubyn and his mistress in town.

The next morning, when Emma and Mr. Egerton set out for their usual walk, they met Varley very near Roselands, who had really walked that way in hopes of seeing Mrs. Castlemain, with whose person as well as rank and fortune he had persuaded himself that he was violently in love, and he had lain awake all night thinking over his chances of success. In the first place he had convinced himself that both Mrs. Castlemain and her

daughter had married at fifteen, and that Emma was only seventeen; therefore, that Mrs. Castlemain was not fifty. In the second place, he knew that many women older, and probably as wise as she, had married young men for love; and he flattered himself that his personal graces and acquirements were such as to excuse such a tender weakness in any woman. In the third place, he had a great idea of the power of perseverance; and could he once get introduced into the family, he was sure that his powers of pleasing would establish him there. In the fourth place, Mrs. Castlemain had had two husbands already; and so far from that circumstance appearing to him likely to militate against the success of any third suiter, he looked upon it as a favourable omen of the success of his suit. But he well knew that he must appear to suffer long, and in secret, and that his best way

to

to obtain hope was to personate *despair*. And *happier* than ever he was in his life, for he had found a lady of rank to be in love with, and to *boast* also of being in love with, feeling that it would tell well to be in love with the honourable Mrs. Castlemain, Varley set off for Roselands to *look* as *unhappy* as possible.

When Mr. Egerton saw him, he bowed, and that gentleman courteously entered into conversation with him, presenting him at the same time to Emma, who was much diverted with his dress. He wore a white hat lined with green, and a pair of striped pantaloons of pink linen, which gave a most offensive air of effeminacy to his appearance. But his conversation was, though affected, not unmanly, and sufficient to convince Emma that his love for her grandmother was no proof of madness, but a great one of worldly wisdom and presumptuous ambition; and she

she had *no mean* idea of his *courage*, to call it by the mildest term, when she heard him say, looking at Roselands,

"'How reverend is the face of that tall pile!'

The views from the *house* must be very *fine*, I should think." But as neither Emma nor Mr. Egerton took the hint, and asked him to return with them, he was forced to wish them good morning, and trust to chance for giving him a sight of the goddess of his idolatry.

"It will be better, I think," said Emma, "not to tell my grandmother we met Varley so near the house:" and Mr. Egerton coincided with her in opinion. But the well-meant caution was vain.

As soon as Varley lost sight of them, he proceeded to Roselands; and discovering a lane that led by the park palings he entered it, and found at the end of it a high gate that commanded a wood

in

in which were several walks: then climbing this gate, he got up a convenient hedge, and, putting his head between the branches of a tree, awaited there the chance of seeing Mrs. Castlemain.

That lady, being full of other thoughts, had forgotten Varley, and was, as usual, taking her morning walk in this her favourite wood; and Varley had not acted Hamadryad long when she came in sight, and passed very near him. The second time she passed still nearer, and Varley ventured to sigh.——Mrs. Castlemain started, looked round, but saw nothing, and passed on. When she was approaching again, Varley by moving moved the branches through which he looked, and the motion attracted Mrs. Castlemain's notice, on which she looked steadily forward and saw a *face* in the tree:—and whose could that face be? Instantly the

idea

idea of Varley recurred to her; and turning round, regardless of her age and her dignity, she ran towards the house with all possible speed;—while Varley exclaimed in transport,

"Just so the fleet Camilla scour'd the plain,
Flew o'er the unbending corn, and skimm'd along the main!"

The Camilla in question, however, not being quite so young as formerly, did not find flying agree with her; and when she reached home she began to doubt her own wisdom in having run so rapidly from what at last might be an imaginary danger. For was it certain that she *had* seen a man's face,—and if she had, was it certainly Varley's? However, she thought it best to ascertain the fact by sending the gardener to search the lane; who soon returned, saying he had seen nothing; for Varley, being

ing conscious that Mrs. Castlemain had acted Camilla merely in consequence of seeing a man's face in the hedge, without at the same time suspecting that man was his charming self, wisely conjectured that she would in her alarm be likely to send some one to search for the intruder and ask what he wanted: therefore he thought it wiser to make a precipitate retreat.

"I shall certainly not tell Mr. Egerton and Emma of my alarm," said Mrs. Castlemain to herself, "for they would only laugh." While Varley, on his return to K——, took care to look very pensive and lovelorn, and to let every one know that he had been wandering near Roselands all the morning, and had seen Mrs. Castlemain; adding with a sigh, "What a fine creature she is! O Heavens!"

The next day Mrs. Castlemain had a great struggle with herself, whether she should take her usual walk or not; but ashamed

ashamed of her own want of courage, she determined to conquer her fears and walk through the wood, and cross a field to visit a poor neighbour. Varley meanwhile had stationed himself in his old place, having resolved, if Mrs. Castlemain saw him and was alarmed, to discover himself, and beg her pardon for having alarmed her; by which means he should have an opportunity of speaking to her, and also rendering her a service; for he had seen a furious bull in the field, and he did not know whether he had not better at once watch for Mrs. Castlemain and accost her, in order to warn her against this identical bull.

Mrs. Castlemain, meanwhile, timidly but rapidly approached the spot where Varley stood, and again she saw a face; on which, as before, she turned about and fled. But Varley, according to his previous resolve, immediately jumped from

the hedge and pursued the fleet Camilla, in order to assure her it was *only he!* little suspecting that that *only he* was the only person of whom the flying lady was afraid. The faster she ran the faster Varley pursued; till at length, unable to run any further, Mrs. Castlemain, nearly fainting, leant against a tree, and Varley stood before her hat in hand, begging leave to assure her that it was he, and r[illegible] evil disposed person, whom she had [illegible] held, and that he had followed her to assure her of her safety, and to warn her against a mad bull that was in the field.

Mrs. Castlemain only bowed and trembled, for she was conscious of being afraid of a mad something, but not of a mad bull: then, with faltering steps, she proceeded towards the house; Varley still following.

"Might I presume, madam," said he, "to take advantage of this opportunity to present

present a little petition?" taking a paper from his pocket, from which also at the same time dropped a German flute——

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Castlemain starting, for she thought it a pistol. But Varley taking it up said, "It is only a flute, which sometimes

'Discourses most eloquent music.'

ut this paper, madam," he added, ving and presenting it. And Mrs. Castlemain, having heard he was poor, and a poet, concluded it was a proposal to print his poems by subscription; and hoping to get rid of him, she eagerly said, giving him a half-guinea which she had loose in her pocket,

"It is not necessary for me to read this paper,—but take this."

The astonished and mortified Varley, who was merely presenting her with a copy of verses which he had written on her

her and Emma, comparing them to a full-blown rose and a rosebud, surveyed the money with a look which Mrs. Castlemain mistook for one of fierce indignation; and fearing she had offended him by the smallness of her donation, she immediately took out her purse, and, putting it in his hand, was ready to exclaim like the old lady in the play,

"Take all I have, but spare my life."

But she only said "Take whatever you please,—you are quite welcome." Then, seeing the gardener approaching, she walked rapidly forward; and before Varley, who was lost in amazement at the offered purse which she left in his hand, could recover himself, she had entered a conservatory communicating with the house, and, having locked the door, sat down to recover herself.

"I have it! I have it!" at last exclaimed

claimed Varley. "She thought I was asking her to subscribe for the relief of some distressed object; and having a hand

'Open as day to melting charity,'

she gave me her *purse* to dispose of. But what could frighten her so? What caused her emotion? Certainly my approach fluttered her, and flutter they say is a sign of love:

'Deep confusion, rosy terror,
Quite expressive paint her cheek!'

Oh! Varley, Varley! what a lucky dog art thou!" Then resolving to call the next day to return the purse and explain the mistake, he went home in the most happy of reveries.

Poor Mrs. Castlemain, meanwhile, had no such enviable sensations; and her companions discovered that something disturbed her, though what it was they were unable to conjecture. At about ten in the evening they heard the sound

of

of a flute at a distance, which seemed to be drawing nearer and nearer, and as it did so they saw Mrs. Castlemain become much agitated.

"How finely the person, whoever he is, plays!" cried Emma: "let us open the window."

"Open the window!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain. "Not for the world! And I will have every door and window closed and barred directly."

"Dear grandmother! What danger can you apprehend?"

"No matter what:—I will be obeyed, miss Castlemain:" and immediately she ordered every window and door to be fastened.

"I suspect," said Emma to Mr. Egerton, "my grandmother thinks it is Varley come to serenade her!" And Emma was little conscious how truly she spoke.

The

The flute meanwhile drew nearer; and had Mrs. Castlemain been a catholic, she would certainly have crossed herself; while her visible alarm astonished her companions.

"Surely, madam, if it be a blunderbuss approaching, it comes in the sweetest shape possible, and I should like to see who carries it."

"I beg, I *entreat*, you will not think of such a thing," replied Mrs. Castlemain; and though reluctant to obey, Mr. Egerton's respect ensured his obedience.

The flute now came very near, and then the sound appeared to grow fainter and fainter, till at length it ceased. But when Mrs. Castlemain had retired for the night it was heard again; and Emma expressed an earnest wish that her grandmother had not forbidden her to peep at the musician.

"But

" But I conclude that you recollect her prohibition, strange as it was, and will attend to it," replied Mr. Egerton.

" Certainly," returned Emma. " I am incapable of being so base as to do behind my grandmother's back what I should not dare to do in her presence."—Then, listening to the flute as they went, which was now evidently under Mrs. Castlemain's window, who slept in the front of the house, they retired to their apartments wondering at that lady's emotion and commands, and suspecting that they were occasioned by some idle or well-grounded fear of her young admirer.

Varley, for it was he, having played

" How imperfect is expression,"

and other love ditties, under Mrs. Castlemain's window, for he had contrived to find out which was her room, retired, resolved to come again early in the morn-

 ing,

ing, though not to approach the house; but he meant to awake his Juliet by his melting strains, and perhaps draw her to the window. Accordingly he came; and as he foresaw, he soon saw a curtain gently drawn aside and closed again. But as it was partly of clear muslin, he was sure he could be seen through it; and immediately ceasing to play, he began to assume despairing looks, and apostrophize with much action the house that contained his beloved; while, as he paced the banks of a fine piece of water opposite Mrs. Castlemain's window, he seemed as if he had a great mind to throw himself in, to the terror of that lady; who now being more than ever convinced that he was insane, was on the point of sending a servant to watch him, when Varley, feeling hungry, and having had no breakfast, thought he had exhibited love enough for one morning, and went quiet-

ly

ly back towards the town. Mrs. Castlemain now began to think seriously of consulting Mr. Egerton, and telling him of her alarm; but still the dread of ridicule prevailed, and she remained silent.

"I will certainly not walk in the woods and lane again," said she to herself: accordingly she went on the other side of the house, and, taking a book with her, sat down, when tired, in a sort of summer-house at the end of a walk, surrounded by what had been a ha-ha, but was now filled with water.

But what can escape the prying eye of love? Varley, having breakfasted, returned, and till the time for his visit to the wood had arrived, had gone round the premises, and had seen Mrs. Castlemain go up and down the walk in question, and then seat herself in the summer-house.

"What an opportunity," thought he,

"to return the purse, and have a conversation with her in that sweet spot! besides showing my grace and agility in jumping that watery barrier."

Mrs. Castlemain was reading at this moment the "Victim of Magical Delusion," and was pitying the poor man, who, like herself, was haunted by one particular person and face; when looking up she saw Varley, who had leaped over the water, standing before her; and instantly uttering a loud scream, she sprung forward, locked the door, and fell back almost insensible in her chair. The gardener was, however, luckily for her, and unluckily for poor Varley, very near at hand; and hearing his mistress scream, he came running, armed with his spade.

Varley, who stood trembling and abashed at sight of Mrs. Castlemain's situation, had added to the strangeness of his white and green hat, and his pink pantaloons,

a branch

a branch of May, which he thought would give him a pastoral and picturesque appearance, and had therefore gathered as he came along, and put on one side of his hat. It was no wonder, therefore, that the gardener should take him for a sort of Mad Tom, (every village having occasionally its "Mad Tom" or its "Crazy Betty,") and lifting up his spade, he desired Varley to go away, and not frighten his mistress.

"I must speak to her, I must indeed," cried Varley.

"Not you, indeed. Poor crazy soul!"

"Crazy! I am not crazy.

'When the wind's southerly I know a hawk from a hernshaw,'"

said Varley. "Nay, let me speak to her."

"There, there, go away! If you are not a little wrong in the head, more shame for you to go about such a figure, looking like a miss Molly, and drest up

in

in flowers. But whosoever you be, as you came over the water, back over it you shall go again; so off with you, my lad; you shall be 'Charley over the water.'"

In vain did Varley entreat to be permitted to go out by some path. The man was resolute, and Varley was forced to attempt the jump: but not being on the vantage ground he was before, he could not effect it, and he fell into the water, whence with great difficulty he contrived to scramble up on the other side. However, he did reach the land at last, but in such a condition that he was glad to hide himself all day in the adjoining wood, and not return to K—— till it was quite dark, lest the boys in the streets should hoot at him, as did the ploughmen who saw him run across the field, and pursued him with shouts and derisions. The gardener, meanwhile, was quite vain of his exploit;

exploit; and looking in at the summer-house window, assured his lady, who was only just recovering her senses, that the poor madman was gone, and she had nothing to fear.

"There!" thought Mrs. Castlemain; "even the servant sees the poor wretch is mad; and when we have left Roselands I will own all that has passed, and make Emma and Mr. Egerton ashamed of their obstinacy."

That evening poor Varley staid quietly at home, excessively chagrined at his morning's expedition, and only consoled by the reflection, that he had not his best coat on when he fell in the water.

The next morning he dressed himself in his best coat, waistcoat, and breeches, and a black hat; and, looking like other people, set out to put in execution a plan which he had now enabled himself to realize.

"Well,

" Well, my alarms are now almost over," said Mrs. Castlemain mentally that morning when she arose. " In another day we leave K——, and it is only giving up one walk; and I will take a drive if I wish for air, and then I shall certainly be safe." When, therefore, Emma and Mr. Egerton set out, as usual, for one of their long rambles, Mrs. Castlemain, instead of going out, sat down to read in her library. The servants had just brought in the luncheon, and Mrs. Castlemain was preparing to lay down her book, having ordered the carriage round, when one of the men came in and told her that a gentleman had called to inquire for Mr. Egerton; but that, hearing he was not at home, he had requested to see her.

" To see me!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain, turning very pale. " What sort of looking man is he, John?"

" Oh,

"Oh, he is a queer-looking gentleman, madam; but it is not the poor man, certainly, that frightened you so much." And Mrs. Castlemain had just desired he might be admitted, when, introduced by another servant, in walked the queer-looking gentleman in the shape of Varley himself; while John, not understanding his lady's nods and winks for him to stay in the room, retired, shutting the door after him.

At first Varley only bowed; while Mrs. Castlemain, rendered respectful through fear, curtsied as much as he bowed. At length he stammered out an apology for having unintentionally alarmed her so often, and she begged him to make no apology. He then approached her, while she retreated to a door behind her, and, presenting a book to her, begged she would do him the honour of giving it to Mr. Egerton, he having sent to London for

it, in order to show it to that gentleman; and as it was a very scarce work, he did not like to leave it in any hands but hers. He then, with a deep sigh, and a look of such love that Mrs Castlemain could not mistake the expression, begged leave to return her purse, as he had had no other petition to prefer to her than one in the success of which his heart was much interested; namely, that she would deign to peruse a little poetical effusion, presenting the paper as he spoke, which he was unable to restrain. And Mrs. Castlemain took it, begging he would sit down, she herself still keeping near the door, and exhibiting evident emotion, which the vain boy attributed to her consciousness of feelings of tenderness towards him which she was ashamed to indulge.

"What a fine piece of water is that in the park, madam!" said Varley; "and it look so calm, so tranquillizing, that a

man

man forced to endure 'the proud one's contumely,' or 'the pangs of despised love,' might easily be tempted to plunge into its silver bosom, and forget his woes for ever."

"*Begin* his woes for ever," replied Mrs. Castlemain, "if he thinks properly of the crime of suicide, sir: and I am sure I should never look at that water again with any pleasure, if a fellow-creature were to drown himself there." Then fancying Varley looked very wild, she got up, saying, "Perhaps you would like to take some refreshment; there it is, ready." Then opening the door, she made a precipitate retreat into the next room, while the delighted Varley seated himself at the table.

As soon as Mrs. Castlemain escaped from the dreaded presence of Varley, she called the two footmen, and desired them not to lose sight of that gentleman, (who was the very man, though differently dressed,

dressed, who had alarmed her before,) till they had seen him safe out of the grounds, and into the town of K———, or in the custody of some of his acquaintance, for she had reason to believe he was mad; and they were to take particular care that he did not go near the piece of water. The servants promised to obey her punctually; and Mrs. Castlemain, finding the coach at the door, jumped in, desiring the man to drive very fast.

Varley, meanwhile, was regaling himself, much at his ease, on excellent cold pigeon pie, flattering himself that Mrs. Castlemain was gone to read his verses. His pride too was gratified by the attendance of the two servants, who, seeing his very odd faces and gesticulations, when, laying down his knife and fork, he indulged in a tender reverie, and congratulated himself on his cleverness in having so well introduced himself at Rose-

lands,

lands, kept looking at each other very significantly, as much as to say, "Aye, poor man! I see my mistress was right!"

But Varley continued eating till he was ashamed to eat any longer. Then beginning to wonder at Mrs. Castlemain's long absence, which he vainly tried to flatter himself was owing to the sweet bashful reluctance she felt to re-enter the room after having perused his verses, he asked the servants if their lady was particularly engaged.

"My lady, sir! Why, she is gone out; that was she who drove away just now."

"Zounds!" cried Varley, starting up with mortified dismay; then with a theatrical air, exclaiming,

'And must I leave thee, paradise!' "

by which the servants though the meant the pigeon pie, he put on his hat and walked out of the house, not knowing exactly

what

what to make of the behaviour of its mistress, but satisfied with the éclat, as he thought it, of being known to the honourable Mrs. Castlemain, of being in love with her, and of having dared to hint his passion to her in verse. Full of these thoughts, which made him sometimes jump, dance, and bound forward as he walked, he was not conscious that the two servants were behind him; and when he was, he certainly felt no small surprise. But having that happy vanity which was capable of converting every thing into a source of pride, he recollected that there were gates to open in the park, and that, Mrs. Castlemain being a lady of the old school, she had with old-fashioned politeness ordered her servants to open the gates for him—and so they did—by that means confirming his suspicions. But nothing could exceed his astonishment, when, as

he

he approached the beautiful piece of water above mentioned, and was dancing towards its brink to look at some swans, the two servants came up one on either side of him, and told him he must walk along the path willingly, or they must make him.

"Make me! make me! A man like me be controlled by two impertinent footmen?" cried the indignant Varley.

"Why, look ye, sir," said John; "it is a good thing for you to have two any-bodies to take care of you: and as to your calling names, if it was not in consideration of your infirmities, why, we'd soon cure you of that fun."

"My infirmities! rascals! I'll go and complain to your mistress of your insolence."

"Aye, do, and she will tell you that we only obeyed orders in not letting you go near the water."

"Obeyed orders!" exclaimed Varley:

'——— Man, proud man,
'Dress'd in a little brief authority——'"

Then recollecting what he had said about drowning himself, and his gestures as if he meant to do it, he imputed this order to weak but alarmed tenderness, and, clasping his hands in an ecstasy, exclaimed "I see what Emma meant to say,

'——— my Varley, live for me.'"

And he bounded along the path with such swiftness, that the servants, now more convinced than ever of his insanity, could hardly keep him in sight. But at this moment he met two gentlemen whom he knew, who each took him under the arm; and the servants seeing him thus, as they thought, in custody, and being now long out of the grounds of their mistress, returned to Roselands, satisfied that they had done all that was necessary.

When

When Mrs. Castlemain returned home, she questioned the servants relative to what had passed, and received from them an account completely corroborative of all her ideas relative to Varley.

" Well," said Mrs. Castlemain to herself, " shall I, or shall I not, tell all that has passed to Mr. Egerton and Emma, and triumph in my superior penetration? No, I dare not; for they will very likely still assert that this youth is not mad; and that I can't bear: for, if not mad, his pursuit of me is an insult not to be endured, and one which I have not deserved. Had I painted my face, and gone about half undressed, and without a cap, I might have been taken for a woman of intrigue, and a silly vain boy might have dared to make love to me; but for a woman of my propriety of conduct and appearance to be the object of a pursuit like this!— No, no, 'tis impossible; I must, in self-defence,

defence, think the poor wretch insane. However, I will desire my servants not to mention what has passed to Mr. Egerton and Emma, and I will be equally silent myself." Accordingly, she only said when they returned, "Mr. Varley has been here, and left this book for you:" and seeing an arch smile on the lip of him and Emma, she suddenly left the room to avoid further questions. The book was that evening returned, with a note of thanks to Varley from Mr. Egerton.

The next morning they set off for London, having given the town of K—— something to talk of for at least a week. One person reporting that Mr. Egerton and Mrs. Castlemain were privately married; another, that they were going to town to be married; a third, that Mrs. Castlemain, having vainly tried to get Mr. Egerton for herself, because he was in love with Emma, and not willing his

wealth

wealth should go out of her family, was going to sacrifice that beautiful young creature to that old fellow through avarice. Popkison said, he supposed the young Parson was going to get ordained. Mrs. Evans declared it made her heart ache to think that poor dear Mrs. Castlemain had so little regard for her reputation as to go about every where with that Mr. Egerton, especially as it was shrewdly suspected he had been the gallant of her daughter. But this she took care never to say in the hearing of Mr. Vincent.

"Now then," said Emma, "we are on the road to this boasted metropolis. But do you think, my dear sir, that I shall certainly admire the style of life and the society which I shall meet with there?"

"Not at first," replied Mr. Egerton. "You will feel, even though conscious of wealth, and of the importance which wealth gives, like a drop in the ocean, or

like

like an atom in creation, when you find yourself in the immense crowd of London, an unknown individual. You will probably wonder at first that there should be so many persons in the world whom you neither know nor are known by: and it will be so impossible for you at first to believe this almost mortifying truth, that, as you drive along the busy streets, you will fancy at every turn that you meet some one whom you have seen before; but in time you will form so many acquaintances, that this illusion of your fancy, or your self-love, will become a reality. Admirers, if not friends, will soon surround the carriage of Mrs. Castlemain's heiress when it stops at a shop in Bond-street, and all the adulation which can attend on youth, wealth, and I will venture to add beauty, will in a very short time, my beloved girl, be yours! And . . . . ." Here Mr. Egerton

paused;

paused; for Emma suddenly leaned her head on the table, and burst into a violent flood of tears; for she felt how contemptible, how valueless would be to her the admiration of the whole world, if unaccompanied by that of one being whom she might never behold again;

"——— an atom to creation, yet of power
To hide the whole creation from her."

Mr. Egerton and Mrs. Castlemain both understood the cause of her tears, but delicately forbore to notice them; and at length Mr. Egerton continued thus: "But in the conversation of flattering men and flattering women you will not find that society of which I have so often boasted; and it will require a long residence in London to procure an entrance into it. It will soon be known that you must be an ornament to a ball-room, or any assembly which you will honour with your presence. But those

whom

whom good taste and a respect for talent lead to assemble at their houses persons of both sexes for the purposes of conversation, will not even suspect, perhaps, that a young and admired woman has similar tastes with themselves, and had rather listen in modest silence to the converse of the intellectual and the learned, an unobserved though not uninterested auditor, than shine the gazed-at meteor of a ball-room, or form the centre of an admiring crowd in a fashionable assembly. But we will endeavour to teach them this, and then, I trust, my dear Emma will feel how just is my partiality to London society."

"I wish it may be so," said Emma: "but at any rate we shall have gained something; we shall no longer be forced to listen to dirty gossip, to stories of vice and folly which often have no foundation; and as no one in this great world

of

of London can know the private concerns of his neighbour, because in London there are no neighbours—and as Mr. D. cannot speak ill of lady C. because he can't be sure that he is not in company with some near relation of the lady's, I am convinced that my good feelings will be more often called forth than my bad ones during my residence in the great city; and I shall scarcely sleep tonight for joy at thinking that in two days more we shall be in London."

At this moment, as they turned up a hill, on which was a sort of seat made of turf, Mrs. Castlemain, looking out of the window, started back in great trepidation, declaring that there was the madman again, and more wild than ever, for he was using violent gesticulations, and even in the carriage she felt afraid of him.

"My dear madam, let me *assure* you," cried

cried Mr. Egerton, "he is *not* mad, poor youth!"

"I don't like to be laughed at," said Mrs. Castlemain.

"Nor would I presume to laugh at you; but it is very certain that this ton-studying, affected, poetical boy has set you up as an idol to worship, and I doubt not but he is standing there on purpose to catch a last glimpse of you."

"Nonsense!" cried Mrs. Castlemain, throwing herself back in the carriage, drawing up the glass first; while Emma, laughing violently, was peeping at Varley through the front windows. The truth was, that he had taken this early walk, not only for the purpose, as Mr. Egerton suspected, of endeavouring to see Mrs. Castlemain, in order that he might write a sonnet on the occasion, and paint to his companions at K—— the elegant

woe he had experienced; but in the hope that he should be favoured with an invitation from Mr. Egerton to call on the family in London. Finding, however, that the coach was not even in sight when he got to the top of the hill, he thought he might as well amuse away the pangs of tender expectation by rehearsing a speech which he was going to make at a debating society in London, whither he was soon to return; and thence arose the vehemence of gesticulation which Mrs. Castlemain beheld. When the coach drew near, Varley took off his hat; and while it passed him, he made a most obsequious bow, but vainly tried to behold the object of his passion. Greatly also was he discomforted by receiving only a cold bow from Mr. Egerton, instead of the expected invitation, while his countenance and affectation had an immediate effect on the risible muscles

even of Mr. Egerton, which were so rarely acted upon; an effect which was not at all counteracted by a "Let me tell you, this is *mighty disagreeable*," and "I am very glad we have left K——," from the incensed Mrs. Castlemain.

They little suspected, nor even did Varley himself, the mortification that awaited him on his return to K——; a mortification infinitely greater than that of not having received an invitation to call on Mr. Egerton in town, nor even a gracious smile and bow of adieu from the divine widow, in return for his elegant verses.

Popkison was riding along the road to Roselands at the very time when the servants of Mrs. Castlemain were following Varley; and from a hill commanding the park, he saw Varley's approach to the water, and the singular conduct

of

of the men in consequence of it. "This is very strange," thought Popkison; and soon after seeing Varley running along the foot-way to the town, while the men turned back towards Roselands, he clapped spurs to his horse; and being of a very inquisitive as well as malevolent and gossiping spirit, he rode after the men, and began questioning them relative to what he had seen. Delighted to tell all they knew on the subject, and proud not only of their valour in having taken charge of a madman, but also of their spirited humanity in having dared to oppose him in order to save his life, they told him every thing he asked, calling Varley 'the poor distracted creature!' thereby gratifying Popkison's most favourite propensities so much, that he sincerely regretted an indispensable engagement to dine in the country that day, prevented him from going back to K—— to tell

this

this story, and raise a laugh at Varley's expense. But this benevolent indulgence he was forced to put off till the evening of the ensuing day, when he knew he was to meet Varley at a rout; and he entered the room just as the poor young man was haranguing to a group of ladies and gentlemen, on the beauties of Roselands, and on the excellent pigeon pie which Mrs. Castlemain's cook made; having before informed the company, in order to give them an idea how intimate he was already become with the family, that he had seen them that morning also.

"So!" said Popkison with a malevolent grin, "Mrs. Castlemain gave you cold pie, did she? I wonder she did not give you cold pudding to settle your love, or rather your brain."

"My brain, sir! Do you think that wants settling?"

"Not

"Not I; but no doubt Mrs. Castlemain does. So she sent her two servants home with you!"

"Home! No—only to open the gates for me."

"But would not *one* have done as well?"

"Yes, but it would not have been so *respectful*; and persons of ancient families are always remarkable for carrying good breeding and ceremony even to a fault."

"But where was the servants' good breeding, I wonder, when they *insisted* on your not walking by the water's side?"

"Amazing! How should you know that?" replied Varley, too much thrown off his guard to deny it.

"No matter how I know it,—is it not a fact?"

"Yes; but a fact of so delightful a nature, and originating from so charming

a cause!

a cause! Excuse me, but I cannot explain myself."

"What's all this nonsensical rhapsody, Varley?" replied Popkison, "I shall begin to think Mrs. Castlemain's idea was right." Then to the amusement of the company, but the shame and agony of poor Varley, he related all he had heard from the servants, and even mimicked Varley while eating and walking, as the servants themselves had mimicked him,—till the mortified and self-adoring Varley left the house in a rage. And not being able to bear the ridicule which he knew would continue to be his portion, he threw himself into a coach that very night, having told his friends he was summoned away on business; and having crossed the country to a friend's house, about fifty miles from London, on the Windsor road, he staid there one night, and proceeded to town on the top of a stage coach, the day our travellers

lers arrived at most elegant apartments provided for them in the best part of Piccadilly.

But to return to them: At length, on the third day of their journey, the distant dome of St. Paul's burst on their sight, and proclaimed their approach to the metropolis.

"Now then I shall soon see the good Orwells!" exclaimed Emma. "Oh! how glad I shall be to see *them*, how glad they will be to see *me*, the poor little babe whom—" Here a look from Mr. Egerton broke off her discourse; for the gloom that had during the whole day been evidently gathering on the brow of Mrs. Castlemain, now burst into a convulsive fit of sobbing, which both alarmed and affected her affectionate companions. Yes, they were approaching the metropolis, that place where her discarded daughter, with the lovely girl who sat beside her in her arms,

was

was about to commit the crimes of self-murder and infanticide, in consequence of her unrelenting severity; and she was also about to behold, humbled and conscience-stricken to behold, the benevolent beings, the good Samaritans, who had poured oil and wine into the wounds which she had made, and had proved more truly parents to her child than she herself had been!

"But you are spared to me, and I trust I have done my duty to *you*," she at length articulated, catching Emma convulsively to her bosom.

"You have done your duty by us, and by the Orwells too, my dear madam," said Mr. Egerton in a soothing tone of voice, "and would have done so by your daughter, but for the representations of a villain."

"A villain!" echoed Emma, turning pale with painful emotion, for that villain she remembered was the man who

gave

gave her birth. "Alas!" thought Emma, whose mournful recollections 'and blighted prospects in love' had been, unknown to herself, dissipated for some hours by the consciousness of the favourable circumstances under which she was going to be introduced into fashionable life, and who was feeling the advantages attending on being young, handsome, accomplished, and an heiress,—"alas! how many, perhaps, are the drawbacks on the apparently most brilliant situation, could one but commune with the closely veiled heart! Who will suspect, while I am smiling amidst the glittering crowds of London, that I *know* my father to be a villain, and that I feel in the secret recesses of my heart all the torments of a virtuous but hopeless passion?"

Mr. Egerton observed the reverie into which she had fallen, and, in order to put

 an

an end to it, directed her attention to the beauty of Highgate Hill and the surrounding country. And soon the everywhere increasing promises of an approaching London, the regularly built rows of houses stretching on every side, bearing the pompous names of Paradise-Row, Paragon-Place, Phœnix-Terrace, by awakening a new train of ideas in her mind, weakened the force of old and painful associations, and substituted in their stead a variety of new and pleasant ones.

At about three in the afternoon they arrived at the place of their destination,—not without Emma's having, as Mr. Egerton predicted, several times fallen into the error of fancying she saw persons whom she knew; while Mrs. Castleman beheld, in the brilliant scene of wealth and business and existence around her, nothing but that London where her daughter had

suffered,

suffered, and where she had nearly died the death of the despairing. Her feelings therefore in consequence of this remembrance were indeed insupportable; and as soon as she alighted, she retired into her own apartment, unable even to bear to witness the delight of Emma at the novelty and splendour of every thing which she beheld from the windows.

"How much more interesting, my dear Emma, would this scene, pleasant as it is, become to you," said Mr. Egerton, "if I could tell you the names of some of the gentlemen whom you see standing in groups near the windows, or lounging up and down the street! for among the throng are probably men of rank without name, and men of name without rank, generals and admirals who have fought and bled for their country, and orators who have endeavoured to promote

mote her interests in the senate. Perhaps at this moment some fashionable poet whose works have delighted you is passing under the window, or some distinguished pleader, whose eloquence, even in newspaper reports, has aroused your feelings in the cause of oppressed innocence."

"How tantalizing," cried Emma, "and how mortifying it is to think, that of so many well-known persons I know not one!"

At this moment a stage coach passed; and seated on the top of it, though muffled up as it were, Emma beheld and recognised Varley, who, with laudable œconomy, was contented to be an outside passenger to the great city, whither he was hastening to gain a livelihood by the exertion of his industry and talents. Immediately Emma,

being

being thrown off her guard by the pleasure of seeing one face that she knew, exclaimed "It is Mr. Varley!" kissing her hand in even delighted recognition; while poor Varley, mortified at being known in such a situation, and too angry with Mrs. Castlemain to wish to be recognised by any of her family, turned away his head without noticing her salute, in hopes by so doing she would imagine she had mistaken some one for him.

"It certainly *was* Varley," said Mr. Egerton. "The foolish young man would not return the bow, because he is evidently ashamed of what he ought to be proud of, namely, the virtue of squaring his expenses to his circumstances."

"He is certainly following my grandmother," said Emma laughing; "but I will not tell her of his arrival for fear of alarming her."

At this moment they heard a violent

lent crash and loud screams; and throwing up the window, they saw that owing to a hole in the street the coach had been overturned, and poor Varley precipitated from his elevated station into the kennel. The first impulse of Emma was to run out herself, and inquire if any mischief had been done. But Mr. Egerton prevented her; nor did he go himself, as he saw that the only inside passenger was taken out unhurt; and he soon beheld Varley on his feet, evidently suffering no inconvenience but that of being covered with mud.

"But surely, sir," said Emma, "it would be only kind in you to ask Mr. Varley to come in and take a glass of wine after his fright!"

"No, my dear girl," he replied. "I suspect, from Varley's manner, that it would be very unkind; for his self-love would be more wounded by the conviction that we had witnessed his distress, than

than by our desire to comfort him under it; and I dare say the foolish boy is more mortified at the possibility of our having seen him on the top of a coach, and thence precipitated into the dirt, than he would have been had we seen him reeling home from a tavern in a state of inebriety. Such are the false estimates of good and evil appearance, which we all in our turns make." They now saw a fat, vulgar, loosely and dirtily dressed woman run across the street, who going up to Varley with open arms, exclaimed with loud sobs and many tears, "Oh! my dear Billy! my dear Billy! are you sure you are not hurt, my Billy! my poor dear child!"

It was Varley's mother, who expecting his arrival had gone out to meet him, and had seen the accident happen before she had reached near enough to ascertain the degree of damage that had ensued.

It was not in the nature of Emma or Mr. Egerton to experience any thing but respect and sympathy for the fears of a mother for the safety of a darling son, however ridiculously expressed; and at first even the populace respected her alarm. But knowing it to be groundless, and poor dear Billy wholly unhurt, they could not survey without excessive laughter the endeavours of Mrs. Varley to clean her son; who, taking from her pocket a handkerchief begrimed with snuff, wiped the poor youth's face with it so elaborately, that it was streaked from one end to the other; and the sight excited such excessive mirth in the spectators, that Varley, suspecting the Roselands family were witnesses to his mortification, broke from his poor mother's grasp, and running down the street was out of sight in a twinkling; while he from that time cherished a spite against

them, which he took the earliest opportunity of indulging.

It is curious to observe in the history of men, and even of kingdoms, how often the destiny and the most important event in the lives of both, are to be traced up to the most apparently trifling and insignificant of events.

While watching the motions of the discomfited beau, neither Emma nor Mr. Egerton was conscious of the effect which the appearance of the former had had on the gay crowd between them; but when Varley had disappeared, Emma blushed with confusion, at finding herself the object of universal attention, while many glasses were levelled at her, and some gentlemen absolutely stopped in order to gaze more at their ease at the new and beautiful face before them.

Emma instantly drew back, sorry to find her indiscretion had deprived her of the pleasure

sure which she derived from watching the passers by, as she saw several persons pass and repass evidently from the hope of seeing her again; for, whatever satisfaction her vanity might derive from this tribute to her charms, it was dearly purchased, she thought, by being forced to forgo that of standing at the window. But after all this was a heartless enjoyment, and a mere gratification of the eyes and the curiosity. A dearer and a more respectable one awaited her the next day, as every feeling most near to her heart decided her to pay her first visit to the Orwells.

The next morning, when they assembled at the breakfast table, Emma proposed going at eleven o'clock to call on the Orwells.

"You are in a great hurry, I think," said Mrs. Castlemain starting, and in a tone of pique.

"Not in too great a hurry surely, madam," replied Mr. Egerton, "to see persons to whom we all owe so much!"

"Well, well," she returned with a deep sigh, "but you had better send them word that you are coming."

"They know it already: I never like what are called agreeable surprises: I think that by depriving persons of anticipations of pleasure, one robs them of more than half the pleasure itself: I therefore wrote to the Orwells last night, to announce our visit today."

"I think you might have consulted me first," said Mrs. Castlemain angrily; "but I suppose you will not insist on *my* going with you."

"Certainly not, though we shall regret your absence: but why, dear madam, should you not go?"

"Oh! because—because it will be for many reasons a painful visit to me."

"Then get it over."

"Besides, the Orwells don't wish to see me."

"Not to see you! Not to see their benefactress!"

"*Their* benefactress! Oh, Mr. Egerton!"

"Yes, madam, their benefactress. My dear lady, why will you always dwell on your past and repented errors, and forget the virtues by which you have made such proud atonement? The Orwells owe you *much*, and I am sure that they will be cruelly disappointed if you do not accompany us."

"Do you think so?" said Mrs. Castlemain in a gentler tone, soothed and encouraged by this speech; and on Emma's tenderly approaching her, and begging her to go with them, she consented, and as soon as the carriage came to the door they got in and drove to the house of Mr. Orwell.

It was in a small street in Kensington, and

and was pleasantly situated on the side of a wide field, while the back windows commanded the well cultivated country adjoining. This house, furniture and all, was the gift of Mrs. Castlemain, who accompanied it by a deed of settlement of a handsome annuity on Mr. and Mrs. Orwell for their joint lives, sufficiently large for them to give up half the produce of their business to their nephew, and enjoy the blessing of, comparatively, country air; while, as they gazed with ever new delight on the comforts that surrounded them in their new habitation, their grateful and conscious hearts whispered, "All these are the reward of an act of kindness to a suffering and friendless fellow creature!"

The Orwells, as soon as the church clock struck eleven, began to count the moments which must still intervene before they beheld their anxiously expected guests; while Mrs. Orwell endeavoured to beguile

beguile the time by calling the maid again and again to rub the mahogany tables,—being never satisfied with their brightness, so eager was she to show Mrs. Castlemain the care she took of the furniture which she had bestowed. Mr. Orwell, unable to sit still, walked up and down before the door; and Mrs. Orwell had stroked down her bustling because clear-starched muslin apron at least twenty times, as she heard the sound of an approaching carriage, before the expected party arrived.

"I wonder who the child is like, my dear," said she, joining her husband in his walk.

"The child! You forget, old woman, that the child is now a young lady."

"True, true;—but I think I see her now as when——" Here affecting recollections made emotion break off her speech; and the old man, equally affected, spoke

spoke not, but pressed her arm, which was locked in his.

"I wonder whether she is like the drawings we have of her," resumed Mrs. Orwell; and in spite of her knowledge that Emma was now indeed a woman grown, her idea of her could not get beyond those drawings, and she clothed the image of Emma in the childish form which they exhibited.

The expected visitants, meanwhile, were not without their agitations. Mr. Egerton was much affected by the sight of Mrs. Castlemain's agitation; but in Emma's he participated, for it was the flutter of joyful sensibility.—She was to see the preservers of her and her mother's life! and the tear that trembled in her eye was one of grateful pleasure. At length they arrived at the little gate which opened into the small garden leading to the house in which Mrs. Orwell

had

had intended to await her guests; but as soon as the coach was drawing up, overcome with trepidation, she hastened back into the parlour, and, scarcely knowing what she did, began to set the chairs, and wipe down the table with her handkerchief. Meanwhile, Mr. Orwell stood bowing at the door. Mr. Egerton got out first, and seizing the old man's hand pronounced "God bless you, sir!" with such earnestness of feeling, that he took from Mr. Orwell the power of replying.

Mrs. Castlemain then, leaning on Mr. Egerton, tottered into the house; and Emma bounded out after her; while Mr. Orwell followed, raising his eyes in pious thankfulness for having been allowed to save the life of such a creature! Mrs. Orwell stood at the door of the parlour to curtsey if not to speak her welcome. But Mrs. Castlemain did not notice her; she

she rushed past her, and throwing herself on the sofa hid her face with her hands.

"Shall I get the lady any thing?" said Mrs. Orwell to Mr. Egerton.

"No; you had better take no notice of her," he replied in a low voice; and Mrs. Orwell turned from Mrs. Castlemain to look at Emma.

"Bless me!" cried she, "is it possible? Can that fine young lady be . . ."

"It is the child whom . . . ." replied Emma: she could say no more, but gracefully throwing herself into the extended arms of Mrs. Orwell, she sobbed out her thanks on her shoulder; and Mr. Egerton, seizing Mrs. Orwell's hand, raised it to his lips as respectfully as he would have done that of an empress.

"But where is Mr. Orwell?" said Emma recovering herself; while the old man, wiping a tear from his eyes, came forward and affectionately saluted the wet

and glowing cheek which Emma presented to him.

"This is a proud day for you both," said Mr. Egerton as he and Emma seated themselves on the offered chairs.

"Yes," observed Emma, "it must give you great pleasure to see one who owes you so much."

"But I am the person the most obliged," cried Mrs. Castlemain uncovering her face, "and I, I cannot even articulate one thank."

"Madam," replied Mr. Orwell, "it is for us to thank you! Look round! and all the comforts we enjoy are, you well know, the gift of your benevolence!"

"Say rather of my *gratitude*," she resumed, "for obligations which I can never sufficiently repay. Let me," she added, taking a hand of both Mr. and Mrs. Orwell, "let me clasp in mine the hands of the preservers

of

of. . . ." and as she pressed their trembling hands, she bowed her head on them with the humility of a contrite spirit.

"You have a very pleasant house here," said Mr. Egerton.

"Yes, indeed," replied both at once; "and I am sure," continued Mr. Orwell, "that coming to it has lengthened both our lives."

"God be praised!" cried Mrs. Castlemain, smiling through her tears, and bowing to the gratified Orwells. Soon after, as she followed the eyes of Emma towards some drawings which decorated the room, she saw enough to convince her those drawings were by Agatha; and she again hid her face in her handkerchief.

"But why is there no drawing *here*?" said Emma pointing to a vacant space over the chimney piece. "If you have

not one large enough for that place, I will give you one of mine."

"I should rejoice to have it," said Mrs. Orwell, "but . . . ."

"My dear," interrupted Mr. Orwell hastily, "*some other time*, not now, we will explain."

Mrs. Castlemain at this moment raised her head; and seeing by the nails in the wall that a drawing or picture had once hung in that place, suspected the truth, and desired to know whether a picture or drawing had not for some particular reason been removed.

"Yes, madam," replied Mr. Orwell, "one which we thought it might give you pain to see."

"No matter," rejoined Mrs. Castlemain with quickness, "I would rather you should inflict pain on me than not:" —and Mrs. Orwell brought in the drawing.

ing. It was a coloured drawing representing Mrs. Orwell with Emma pale and dying on her lap; while Agatha, on her knees beside her, was awaiting with clasped hands and a look of wild anguish the effect of the nutriment which Mrs. Orwell was going to convey into the infant's mouth.

"It is *very* like her," said Mr. Egerton with a quivering lip.

"It is like, indeed!" said Emma, gazing wistfully on the beloved face of her unhappy mother.

"It is not like my child as *I knew* her!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain wildly, and falling back on the sofa in an agony almost too great to bear.

"I would not be that poor lady for all the world!" thought Mrs. Orwell:— "my poor Mary died in my arms! . . . . Sir, sir," said Mrs. Orwell, affectionately pressing Mr. Egerton's arm,

"were

" were not you the gentleman who was with . . . . ."

" We will talk of those things another time, my dear madam," interrupted Mr. Egerton; then approaching Mrs. Castlemain, he asked her if she had not better return home; to which proposal she thankfully assented; and Mr. Egerton having put her into her carriage, and well knowing she would prefer solitude to company, desired the carriage to return for them as soon as it had set down Mrs. Castlemain.

" Now, my dear friends," said Mr. Egerton, " I will tell you all you wish to know." And Emma as well as the Orwells listened with eager interest to the description of Agatha's last illness and death, and the journey Mr. Egerton took with his orphan charge; while ever and anon the deeply interested old couple interrupted him with exclamations of " Dear

child!

child! poor little girl!" then turned to gaze with pleasure almost amounting to rapture on the lovely and expressive face of the being whom they had been the means of preserving.

Almost daily did Emma and Mr. Egerton visit the Orwells; and Mrs. Castlemain too very often forced herself to call on them: but she was never easy in their presence, and was also conscious that, however gratefully they felt towards her as their benefactress, a chill came over their feelings when they thought of her as the unforgiving mother of Agatha: and at such times she could not help recollecting, that in Agatha's narrative she had herself contrasted with her own mother's conduct the benevolence of these strangers. But to the pleasure which Emma and Mr. Egerton derived from being with these good old people there was no drawback, and many a day did Emma spend with them

them alone; for she thought that they had a right to some hours of that existence which they had preserved; and the joy that sparkled in their countenance whenever she appeared, gave her more heartfelt satisfaction than the homage paid her by admiring crowds. They were more at ease with Emma than they had ever been with her mother; for she united to the dignity of Agatha a degree of graciousness and playfulness of manner wholly unknown to her; and never once were the Orwells reminded by Emma's manners, though they had often been by Agatha's, that there was any difference between them in rank and situation.

But the pleasure which Emma derived from visiting the Orwells was not wholly the result of a feeling of duty fulfilled. They had informed her that a very handsome young man had called on them a few

months

months preceding her arrival in town, and had told them that he came to see them, from the respect their conduct to Mrs. Danvers and her child had excited in him; and that having staid with them an hour or two, during which time he had informed them that he knew Mrs. and miss Castlemain and Mr. Egerton, he had taken his leave without letting them know his name or place of abode. But Emma was at no loss to discover who this visitant to the Orwells was; and the consciousness that St. Aubyn, actuated no doubt by the interest he still felt in her, had been at that house, had sat in that apartment, and had conversed with the owners of it, gave a degree of charm in her eyes to them and to their residence, which other feelings, though very powerful, could not alone have bestowed.

Emma often recollected that Mr. Orwell had once been opulent, and had pro-

bably been no stranger to the luxuries which opulence bestows: she therefore could not rest till she had seen his old age in possession of most of the enjoyments which his youth had known.

"I wonder whether he ever kept a close carriage?" thought Emma: and she contrived to find out that he had not, but that for many years he had had a one-horse chair, in which he used to drive his mother. This intelligence and her wishes in consequence of it were immediately made known to Mr. Egerton, who joyfully undertook to purchase a low-built open chaise, and a steady horse to draw it; while Mrs. Castlemain and Mr. Egerton disputed which of them should defray the expenses attendant on this new appendage to the establishment of the old couple. But at length Mr. Egerton carried his point; and till Emma came of age, and had an allowance of her own,

it was agreed that Mr. Egerton should be at all the charges incident to this gift.

"Dear me! see what a pretty little carriage has stopped at our door!" said Mrs. Orwell to her husband, when Emma, who had come to spend the day with them, was standing by her side at the window.

"A pretty carriage indeed!" replied he: "I wonder whose it can be; for see, the servant who is in it is getting out, and coming hither. It must be a mistake, unless he brings some message to you, miss Castlemain."

"He has made no mistake," cried Emma; "and I have to request that you, my dear sir, will drive me a little way on the road, that I may see how the horse goes."

"I drive you, my dear!"

"Yes; you know you used to drive your mother, and I hope and trust that

for

for many a day to come you will drive Mrs. Orwell in that chaise for my sake; for that chaise and horse are yours, if you will do us the honour of accepting them."

The delighted old couple, well aware that in accepting this gift they should impart more pleasure than they received, gratefully acceded to her request, and Mr. Orwell had the pride and satisfaction of driving Emma through the beautiful environs of Kensington.

But though Emma derived unmixed satisfaction from her visits to the Orwells, they frequently beheld her with mingled pleasure and pain; for Mrs. Orwell, like all women quick-sighted to the feelings of her sex, soon discovered that some secret disquiet preyed on the mind of Emma, and she suspected her young favourite was in love.

"And if she *were*," said Mr. Orwell petulantly, when Mrs. Orwell communicated

nicated her discovery to him,—" if she be in love, as she can't love in vain, that I am sure of, her cares, if she has any, can't proceed from that source."

" But perhaps she loves some one whom her grandmother does not approve! for you remember that very handsome young man's calling on us, to see us as the preservers of miss Castlemain, and who knows but it may be her mother's sad story over again?"

" God forbid!" ejaculated Mr. Orwell; and he resolved to watch Emma as attentively as his wife had done: nor was he slow to discover in her symptoms which alarmed him for her future peace, though they *both* thought that Emma's spirits seemed to grow better from day to day.

Nor were they mistaken. Though Emma thought that she could love one alone, she was not insensible to the pleasure of

being

being admired and addressed by sensible and respectable men, amongst whom sir Charles Maynard had pleaded his suit, but pleaded in vain. And now, Mr. Egerton and Mrs. Castlemain having both renewed some of the acquaintance of their youth, she often associated at her grandmother's table with persons of acknowledged talents and great conversational powers; and she had also been introduced into those parties which she and Mr. Egerton used to discuss under the name of conversationes. These parties were held at a house where she would infallibly have met Mrs. Felton, had not that lady been at variance with the mistress of it; nor did they resume their acquaintance till Emma left London.

On these evenings they used to arrive at the lady's house at an early hour, and were introduced into a most elegant and tastefully decorated apartment, containing

taining a party sufficiently large to admit of its being formed into many groups, but not large enough to preclude the possibility of walking about with ease and comfort. Amongst the company were usually men and women of the highest rank in the country, but waving all the distinctions of their rank and situation, and only desirous of recommending themselves by their own talents, or their graceful and respectful attention to the exhibited talents of others; for many of both sexes who held a distinguished place in the literature, the arts or the sciences of the day, were mingled in this fashionable throng, and joining in that greatest of all delights, rational conversation. Emma, though her polite hostess frequently endeavoured to call her forth, was always contented to listen; but was in silence so animated and intelligent, that once, as she timidly declined giving a de-

cisive opinion on a subject which she was hearing discussed, an elderly gentleman, turning to his neighbour, observed that that young lady need not speak in order to charm, for that she reminded him of the lines of the poet with one word altered—

"Alike her speaking and her silence move,
Whose voice is music, and whose looks are
love."

At the close of one of these evenings our heroine and her friends observed that the party had increased so much that the adjoining room was full of company, while they heard one voice louder than the rest speaking alone; and as the folding doors which divided the rooms were at this moment thrown open, Mrs. Castlemain, with infinite amazement, beheld Varley, standing up in the middle of the room, speaking with great vociferation, and using

ing gestures of the most violent description.

It was indeed Varley exercising for the amusement of the company a talent which, as I have before observed, he possessed in no mean degree, viz. that of spouting or acting. He was not the mimic or copier of others; on the contrary, he gave his own conceptions of certain parts, both in comedy and tragedy, from which, with the occasional aid of paint and dress, he was in the habit of acting detached scenes in a very amusing and interesting manner. It had long been the first object of Varley's ambition to get introduced into fashionable circles; and to do that he would willingly have consented to play Punch, or grin through a horse collar, had such accomplishments been deemed necessary to procure such an introduction. At this acme of his ambition he luckily was

introduced

introduced to a gentleman of some rank, who was a Pidcock or a Polito in his way, and was famous for assembling at his house those rarities, or monsters, or wild beasts, denominated remarkable persons, or persons possessed of curious and amusing talents. Dwarfs, giants, ventriloquists, Turks, parrots, monkeys, mimics, often formed the rare and entertaining menagerie of this gentleman when he opened his house to fashionable society; and having been told by his hair-dresser that a young man of his acquaintance in the War-office had great talents for spouting, the delighted Varley received an invitation to dine with this gentleman,—who, finding he really had the talents imputed to him, invited him to a party; and thence he gained admission to the still more tonish house of the lady where Mrs. Castlemain saw him.

It was the first time of Varley's appearing

pearing there, when his evil genius led the family from Roselands thither also.

Such is the power of prepossession, that even seeing Varley at this house had not power to remove Mrs. Castlemain's impressions concerning him, and she said to a gentleman near her—"How shocking it is that no one has humanity enough to interrupt that poor young man, and lead him home!" Then seeing Mr. Egerton, she exclaimed, "There, Mr. Egerton! here is your boasted London society indeed! How dreadfully cruel and unprincipled it is for persons to amuse themselves with the ravings of a madman!"

"Indeed," said Mr. Egerton, "Mr. Varley is only showing off as a spouter, and is now acting Benedict. Approach, and you will be convinced of it." And as Emma, who was already listening to him, smilingly beckoned her, Mrs. Castlemain leaning on Mr. Egerton's arm

timidly

timidly drew near. But as Varley's eye happened at this moment to turn towards Mrs. Castlemain, the consciousness that she had it in her power to tell a ridiculous story of her mistaking him for a madman, so completely overset him, that after fruitlessly endeavouring to recollect himself, and go on with his speech, he complained of illness occasioned by the intense heat of the room, and made a precipitate retreat before any one could stop him.

But when was excessive vanity unaccompanied by malignity? Varley, who was never happy except he was in all places the prominent person, was so provoked at the power which Mrs. Castlemain's appearance had on him, as it prevented his continuing to be that evening a centre of attraction, that he determined to be revenged; and whether she did or did not tell the story of his love,

and its results, he was resolved to inflict mortification to the best of his power on her and Emma, in return for that which they had occasioned him that evening, and at K——. Accordingly, being at this time a writer in a fashionable newspaper, he inserted the following paragraph:—

" We hear from undoubted authority, that the hon. Mrs. C——, grandmother to the beautiful Northern star that now glitters in our hemisphere, intends to obtain letters patent for this young lady to bear the arms and take the name of C——n, as she was not born in wedlock, therefore could not otherwise be called by the ancient and noble name of C——n, though she will inherit some of the estates of that family; thus endeavouring to hide this terrible stain on the purity of the T——n family, by the spotless shield of that

that of C——n. This may be called *an escutcheon of pretence* indeed!"

This paragraph had all the power to wound the mother and daughter of Agatha which he expected it would have; for he had heard at K—— that Mrs. Castlemain's feelings were most painfully alive to any allusions to the illegitimacy of Emma, and he took a malignant pleasure in thus exercising the most dangerous of all powers, that of wounding anonymously. Deeply indeed was Mrs. Castlemain distressed to see the fame of Agatha publicly injured, and her child declared illegitimate, without the power of vindicating her in any convincing or satisfactory manner; for the only evidence which they could at present adduce even to their friends and relations, was the declaration of Agatha that she was the lawful wife of Danvers, because he

had led her to the altar *after* the death of his first wife, as was proved by the letter to him which she had found and preserved;—while Danvers on the contrary asserted in his letter to Mrs. Castlemain, that his first wife was *alive* when he married Agatha. And as no register had yet been found to contradict by its *date* the truth of this assertion, there was only too much reason to believe that Emma's claims to legitimacy would always remain disputable.

"This paragraph must have been written by some secret enemy," said Mr. Egerton thoughtfully.

"But whom can we have offended?" demanded Emma. "I flattered myself that I had no enemy."

"No enemy!" replied Mr. Egerton. "Then, my dear child, you must have thought you had no merit. But whoever wrote the paragraph in question, it is very certain

certain that it calls upon us imperiously to endeavour once more to procure a copy of the registry of your mother's marriage. And I must advertise again in all the papers a considerable reward to whoever will procure one."

"Advertise!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain, who had hitherto preserved a gloomy silence, "advertise, and we in London! I could not endure it, indeed I could not."

"Well, then, let us leave London." And Emma, disgusted and alarmed at this effusion of secret malice, consented joyfully to the proposal.

"But whither shall we go?" she added.

"What say you, ladies, to a trip to Paris?" replied Mr. Egerton; while Emma almost screamed for joy at the idea.

"I should like it excessively," said Mrs. Castlemain, "as being out of England during the time we are adver-

tising

tising would be a most desirable circumstance indeed."

"Then let us take the necessary steps immediately." And in a few days every thing was ready for their departure.

Thus did the paltry spite of a vain malignant boy, the result of a wound to his self-love, disarrange the plans and disturb the quiet of these respectable individuals; and thus did a paragraph in a newspaper lead them to a scene pregnant with the fate of their future lives, and fraught with events of the most serious and important nature.

This paragraph, however, stimulated afresh Mr. Egerton's intention to call on the minister of the parish where Agatha had been married; and at her earnest request Mrs. Castlemain and Emma, as well as Mr. Orwell, accompanied him. They found, on inquiring for Mr. Jones, that

that he was still alive, and still minister of that parish; therefore they knew that they had met with the object of their search. He was also at home, and they were immediately conducted to him into that very room where the poor Agatha, nearly nineteen years since, had vainly opposed the representations of injured and helpless innocence to the successful machinations of a villain.

Mr. Egerton told the cause of their visit, and the subject of their inquiry, in as few words as possible; and Mr. Jones assured him that he recollected the *poor lady's* calling on him, and her evident derangement, perfectly. But on Mr. Egerton's asking him whether he had judged her to be insane from his own observation only, or from the previous suggestions of another, he owned that he entered the room prepared to see a mad

woman,

woman, because his clerk, Cammell, had assured him she was notoriously so, and told him the cause of her madness.

"Then, sir, that Cammell was a villain; for the poor lady was in her perfect senses, though driven perhaps into the temporary phrensy of passion by the consciousness of being the victim of treachery. ——But where is this man, this Cammell?"

"Cammell! Cammell!" exclaimed Mrs. Castlemain in an agitated manner, "What sort of man was he, sir, and how long had he been clerk of this parish?"

"For about nine years, I believe, madam; and he was a man marked with the small pox, with small light eyes and turned-up nose, and very red hair."

"And whence did he come, sir?"

"From somewhere in the North,—Cumberland, I believe."

"It is he! it is the same man!" cried

Mrs. Castlemain turning pale as death: "he left Cumberland about that time; and I was told, after he left my neighbourhood and went to London, that he had often wished to be revenged on my poor child."

"Revenge! for what, madam?" asked Mr. Egerton.

"Ask me not now!" she replied in agony the most overwhelming. "The miseries of my child are on my head, and I feel sinking under the load."

"However," observed Mr. Egerton, "we have gained much by finding that Cammell had a motive to join Mr. Danvers in his scheme against his unhappy wife. But where is this man? Let him be confronted with us."

"That, sir, is impossible," replied Mr. Jones in some confusion; "for he absconded about two years ago with all his family, and it is supposed he went abroad,

abroad, having been detected in some very dishonest practices: therefore I really think it very likely, if I had not been conscious the registry had never been from under my eye, that the poor lady's accusation was just."

"I am sorry he is gone off," said Mr. Egerton; "though this evidence of the man's villany gives still greater credibility to the fact we wish to establish. And now, sir, you shall hear what happened to this injured lady, on the evening of the day on which *you* saw her, from the mouth of that benevolent being who succoured her in her distress; the good Samaritan who poured oil and wine into her wounds, while the priest passed by on the other side." So saying, he led Mrs. Castlemain into the room where they had left Emma and Mr. Orwell, and returned to Mr. Jones accompanied by the latter.

As soon as Mr. Orwell had told his

tale,

tale, which clearly proved the sanity of Agatha,—as whatever might be called insanity in her vanished as soon as the power of the operating causes was removed,—Mr. Egerton desired to introduce to Mr. Jones the orphan of Agatha, whose claims to legitimacy it was now the first desire and purpose of Mrs. Castlemain and himself to prove. But before he did so, he gave him a short detail of Agatha's life, and the circumstances attending her death, in order to interest that gentleman as much as he could in the fate of her injured child, and induce him to do all in his power to aid their efforts to discover Cammell and bring him to justice.

"But allow me, sir," said Mr. Jones, "to make one remark:—I recollect perfectly, that the unhappy lady said to Cammell, who was certainly a most ill-looking man, 'Where have I ever seen you

before?'

before?' and she added words importing the consciousness of having seen his dark pernicious face, as she called it, without being able to recollect where; on which Cammell, saying half aside 'Poor distracted creature!' declared he had never seen her before in his whole life."

"Well, sir,—and what then?"

"Why, sir, as Cammell must have been the clerk at the time of the lady's marriage, if she really was married; and as, according to your own statement, he must have even officiated as father to the lady, it is very strange that she should not have remembered *where* she had seen him; and I confess that this appears to me a strong proof that at this church, at least, the marriage between her and Mr. Danvers never took place."

"There is some plausibility in what you say, certainly, sir," replied Mr. Egerton: "but you should make allowance

for

for the perturbation of mind Mrs. Danvers was under while questioning Cammell, and also for that which she felt during the ceremony of her marriage; for she has declared to me, that she had not the slightest recollection of the clerk who gave her away, nor indeed was she sure that she even looked at him.—She added, that she had forgotten to ask how long this man, whose name she did not know, had been clerk of that parish; but she had a consciousness of having seen him before, when she conversed with him in this house; and, to use her own expression, that the recollection of him was 'associated in her mind with the idea of pain endured long since.' And how *correctly* she judged and felt on this subject we have now her mother's testimony to prove. However, sir, that a marriage *did* take place, we have Mr. Danvers's own evidence in a letter to Mrs. Castlemain,

at

at which time *he* says he had a wife *living*. But this we could prove false, could we obtain a copy of the marriage register, as we have a letter to him proving his wife to have died some time previously."

"Well, sir, well," returned Mr. Jones, "this may be true as you say;" and Mr. Egerton, leaving the room, returned, leading in Emma.

As Mr. Egerton had conducted her, he had given her to understand that Mr. Jones was not very friendly to their cause, and was unwilling to give up the idea of her mother's insanity. Emma, therefore, was not disposed to regard that gentleman with much complacence; and she assumed on her entrance so much haughtiness of manner and expression, that her resemblance to Agatha was rendered thereby even more striking than usual. To her cold and dignified curtsey Mr. Jones returned

a low bow; when venturing to look up in her face he exclaimed,

"I protest I never saw such a likeness! It seems as if her mother really stood before me! Only that this young lady's complexion is more brilliant, and her cheeks and person are fuller."

"No wonder, sir," replied Emma, tears involuntarily filling her eyes, "for I have been the child of happiness and kindness; my poor mother was that of misery, and was the victim of the depravity of others."

"The very voice too, as I live!" returned Mr. Jones.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Egerton, "this is the injured orphan, in order to assert whose rights you see us prepared to bring this whole matter into a court of justice; and your evidence, though not as favourable as we could wish, we shall undoubtedly call for."

"Such

"Such as it is, sir, and such as I can conscientiously make it, you may command it, sir."

"It now only remains that we should examine the register," said Mr. Egerton; and the book was produced. After a long and a most minute examination, even Mr. Jones himself declared, that it did seem as if a leaf might have been torn out much about the time when Agatha stated her marriage to have taken place; though, as he was *positive* the book was under his sole care, he did not see how it could have happened. And having to their own satisfaction established *this* fact, the party returned to London. On their way thither Mrs. Castlemain, with many compunctious feelings, explained the cause of Cammell's inveteracy towards Agatha, and by that means made his compliance with the infamous

proposal of Danvers the less to be wondered at.

On their return home a circumstance happened mortifying to the pride, though not painful to the affections, of Emma. A young nobleman, the eldest son of a peer, had been so charmed with Emma's beauty and other attractions, that he had solicited his father to make proposals in his name to Mrs. Castlemain; and the earl, imagining Emma to be Mrs. Castlemain's daughter, did what his son required.

Mrs. Castlemain, in her reply, referred the gentleman to Emma for his answer, declaring that she would never influence her in her determination on such subjects, though in the present instance she earnestly desired that Emma might approve of the proposal as highly as she did; but that she thought it proper to inform

form

form his lordship that miss Castlemain was not her daughter, but her grand-daughter, her daughter's child by a marriage of which hitherto, and at present, there was no possibility of procuring proofs.

The answer to this letter she received on the day of her return from visiting Mr. Jones; and it added not a little to their wish of quitting England, as the earl politely, but coldly, declined for his son all further thoughts at *present* of an union with miss Castlemain.

During their ride home, Mrs. Castlemain remarked, that she thought it was not right for Mr. Egerton, who wished to conciliate, to call Mr. Orwell the good Samaritan, and insinuate that poor Mr. Jones was the Priest.

"I agree with you," replied Mr. Egerton laughing; "and I can only say, that I was too much at that moment under the

the dominion of TEMPER, that domestic enemy against which I am so fond of guarding others: but I am not at all sure that good Mr. Jones had sense enough to make the application."

The next step they took was to prepare an advertisement for a copy of the registry of the marriage of Agatha Torrington and George Danvers, in case such a copy had been made, offering a very considerable reward.

A few days before their departure they went to the Haymarket Theatre, when just as the play was finishing Emma heard a gentleman in the next place say, "What fine fellow now has Mrs. Felton caught in her chains?—Who is that good-looking youth to whom she is talking?"

"It is a Mr. St. Aubyn," was the answer, "a North country man, who has just entered into the dragoon guards." And

Emma,

f the
and agitated
...ly turned round to look at
him, beheld St. Aubyn, apparently gay and animated, listening with smiling attention to a tonish-looking woman, whose beauty she unconsciously exaggerated to herself.—In a moment the stage, the audience, every thing disappeared from her view but St. Aubyn and Mrs. Felton. Still, however, in the midst of her emotion she felt that seeing St. Aubyn as she *now* saw him, seemingly absorbed by another woman, would be of great service to her heart on reflection: it was the idea that he loved her, spite of his neglect, which made his image so dangerous to her: could she but once be convinced he loved her no longer and loved another, she was *sure* that time and absence would in the end entirely annihilate his power over her. But *absence*

was,

was, sh

not seeing h...

even seeing him paying ...

Felton. She therefore gladly acceded to Mrs. Castlemain's proposal to return home as soon as the play was finished, as she felt oppressed by the heat of the house.

"But surely," said Mr. Egerton to Emma, "you will stay to see the entertainment! You came on *purpose*, and Mrs Castlemain has no objection to returning alone."

"Not in the least," she replied: "do, my dear Emma, stay;—Mr. Egerton will take care of you, and I will send the carriage back."

"Indeed I had rather, *much* rather, go home," said Emma deeply blushing.

"Are you unwell? Are you oppressed by the heat of the house?" And Emma, too great a votary to truth to violate

on any occasion, professed herself
ill nor *warm*, but declared that
d rather go home with Mrs. Cas-
n.

'Tis very strange!" said Mr. Eger-
—when at this moment the same
man who had spoken before ob-
d,

See! see! Look at St. Aubyn!
attentive he seems! Egad, I believe
ir widow has him." On hearing this
Egerton himself turned round, and
g St. Aubyn, no longer thought
a's wish to leave the house an unac-
able one. But he took no notice
of what he saw and thought; only
uld not help gently pressing the cold
which trembled in his.

I will see for the carriage directly,"
he, "and do you remain in the box."
hile he was gone, lounging on the
seat of the box next her Emma
saw

saw Varley; and actuated not only b
wish to be civil to him, but also
desire of turning her attention fr
Aubyn and Mrs. Felton, she c
very kindly to him, and, leaning fo
to speak to him, lamented that she
into the room too late at Mrs. C.'s
gratified like others with his adm
recitations. At this tribute to his
from a quarter so unexpected, and
one too whom mortified vanity ha
him to injure to the best of his
ability, Varley's conscience gave
some well-merited pangs; and sc
could he with all his impudence re
the benevolent and lovely girl wh
dressed him, little suspecting that h
the adder who had stung her and
Castlemain through the medium
newspaper.

In a few moments Mr. Egerton re
ed, accompanied by sir Charles May

assisted in seeing the ladies to their
ge, Varley crossing them on their
in order to be noticed, in sight of
of his fellow clerks, by the beauty
: day.

You are a lucky fellow, Varley,"
ne of his companions to him, just
: Charles returned into the lobby,
have such a bow and smile from that
ic being."

Do you think so?" cried Varley con-
'ly, and pulling up his neckcloth,
: really is a fine creature, and I mean
:ronize her."

:Presuming coxcomb!" said sir
es loud enough for Varley to hear, and giving him a look of fierce disdain; while Varley, pretending not to notice it, slunk away into the crowd and disappeared.

A day or two after, however, sir
C——

C—— M——d was stated in a c
newspaper to have been one of th
successful suitors to a certain Nor
heiress. Had Varley been content
let his revenge stop here, it would
been better for him; but when th
tended departure of sir Charles and
men of fashion for France was a
days after announced in some pape
inserted another paragraph, which w
follows:—

"We hear that sir C—— M—
being disappointed in his matrim
speculations, is glad to escape into
reign land from certain troubleson
membrancers, and is on the eve c
departure from England."

The consequence of this was, th
Charles was arrested at Dover b
alarmed creditor, whose bill he wa
tunately able to discharge immediately,—

vowing

; as he did so, that as soon as he re-
, which would be in a few months,
ıld leave no method untried to dis-
the author of so foul a libel.

e proprietor of the paper in which
wrote was himself abroad when
aragraph concerning sir Charles
nserted, else it would have been
ed as libellous and unsafe; but
erson who officiated for him, know-
rley was a favourite writer of his
yer, concluded what he sent must
nitted and approved, and therefore
ner did not know or did not regard
sk. But when the proprietor himself
ed, he was so justly incensed at the
raph in question, and apprehensive
s consequences, that he paid Varley
whatever he was in arrears to him, and
dismissed him from all future employ-
ment, having first drawn from him a con-
fession

fession of his motives for this calu
insertion ; severely reproaching h
having meanly dared to make the po
anonymous attack with which h
vested, the engine of venting his
petty spite, and the means of grat
the malignity of his offended vanity

The sum of money thus earned
ley, afraid he should never again h
large a sum in his possession at onc
solved to spend in a trip to Paris
there I shall again introduce him
notice of my readers.

It was well for Emma that they
leave England so soon, as she had
to drive along the streets with any
rity and pleasure. She fancied every
tleman she met was St. Aubyn, an
a timid inquiring glance round every
company she entered, dreading to behold
him accompanying her fascinating rival.

But

off for France; and
landed at Calais, "Thank
...n!" she mentally ejaculated, "now
the sea rolls between me and them!"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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